Prediction of Student Achievement in Georgia High Schools Based on Principal Competency as Defined by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards

Amy Teague Loskoski

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PREDICTION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOLS
BASED ON PRINCIPAL COMPETENCY AS DEFINED BY THE
INTERSTATE SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE
CONSORTIUM STANDARDS

by

AMY TEAGUE LOSKOSKI

(Under the Direction of James F. Burnham)

ABSTRACT

The researcher conducted a study of the prediction of student achievement in
Georgia high schools based on principal competencies as defined by the Interstate School
Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders to determine to
what extent principal competency, as determined by the ISLLC standards, predicts
overall student achievement. The poverty level of the school and the principal’s years of
experience in a school were additional variables in the analyses.

Quantitative and qualitative research was conducted using a survey based on the
ISLLC Standards for School Leaders and an interview questionnaire to answer the
research questions. A Principal Competency rating completed by the principals’
superintendents was analyzed with student test scores at each principal’s school on the
Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) from the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004,
and 2004-2005. Other factors used were the poverty levels of these schools and the
principals’ years of experience.

The researcher’s findings indicated a significant relationship between student test
scores and principal competency. However, when taken with the poverty level of the
schools and the principals’ years of experience in the school, no significance was indicated. The poverty level of the school was significant throughout the analyses, and follow-up tests indicated that lower quality principals are placed in schools with high poverty levels. The principal’s years of experience in a school was not significant.

Follow-up interviews with superintendents conducted by the researcher indicated that participants felt leadership standards such as the ISLLC standards do include the qualities necessary for effective school leadership; but, overall, standards were not considered in the evaluations of the principals who were surveyed. Certain qualities or practices that all superintendents include in their assessments of their principals, however, include: 1. Interpersonal and Communication Skills, 2. Culture Building (Shared Values), 3. High Expectations for Students, and 4. High Quality Faculty and Staff.

INDEX WORDS: Principal Competency, Student Achievement, School Poverty, Principal Longevity, Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards (ISLLC)
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DEDICATION

In recognition of all their patience, encouragement, and persistence I hereby dedicate this dissertation to my children Sarah, Van, and Rebecca.
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I wish to express my thanks and praise to my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who gave me life and the life experiences that were necessary to get me to this point in my educational career.

I would like to thank my children, Sarah, Van, and Rebecca, who lived with me, encouraged me, understood me, and tolerated my absence, even in my presence, throughout my graduate studies. This study is the product of us all as we struggled to get me to the final destination. Their unfaltering belief in me was the fuel for my perseverance. They are God’s greatest blessings in my life.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

“There is no greater moral imperative than revamping the principal’s role as part and parcel of changing the context within which teachers and students learn”

(Fullan, 2003, p. 11).

In a democratic society where education is everyone’s business, the moral purpose of education is at the heart of the matter (Fullan, 2003). In an increasingly diverse society where public schools were established for the common good of all people which must serve all children, it is the duty of the education system to address the cognitive as well as the social needs of the children as society’s needs change. High-quality public education is essential, not only for the parents of these children, but for the good of the public, and educational leaders must be mindful of the fact that it is a simultaneous practice (Fullan).

History of Effective Leadership

From the command of Alexander the Great to the generalship of Robert E. Lee the decisive effects of leadership success were recognized by society (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). Fiedler and Chemers (1976) alleged that had George Washington lacked the skill and determination he proficiently used during his leadership in the Revolutionary War, different results may have negatively affected our country. Yet, leadership success has not always been defined as that displayed by war heroes. John Keegan wrote that if it had not been for Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt, western civilization might have perished (Gegen, 2005).
Although the importance of leadership effectiveness prevailed long before the 20th century, it was not until 1904 that the first empirical investigation of the concept of leadership was published with the major impetus of effective leadership occurring in World War I when problems with officer selection and placement became prevalent (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). The focus of this research posited on the identification of leadership traits and the means of emergent leadership positions. Many states began requiring formal coursework in educational leadership (Murphy, 1998), questioning the way administrators of the times were managing schools (Cooper & Boyd, 1987). This eventually led to the current questions of effective leadership and the problem on which leadership theorists differ – the definition of leadership “effectiveness” (Fiedler & Chemers).

Effective leadership should not be confused with being a good person or even with the act of a leaderlike manner (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). They defined leadership effectiveness in terms of “how well the leader’s group performs its assigned functions” (p. 7). Fiedler and Chemers maintained that when organizations set goals, a clear statement of the criteria for effectiveness is made, and, thus, the effectiveness of the leader is defined. Pounder, Ogawa, and Adams (1995) considered this concept of leadership an organizational quality, given that organizational leaders influence organizational culture and performance through their traits and actions (Pounder et al.).

In light of this definition, research conducted in the attempt to measure leadership effectiveness by one set of criteria seems futile. However, if leadership is viewed as an influence that occurs between leaders and followers when people in the organization intend significant changes and reflect shared purposes and goals, leadership effectiveness
may be measured according to society’s view of leadership roles (Fiedler & Chemers; Matthews & Crow, 2003). Leaders, therefore, naturally function in different roles among organizations in the corporate world and in the world of education.

History of the Principalship

Although few educators would disagree that good leadership can be learned from other elements in society, leadership for learning distinguishes the type of leadership needed in educational organizations (Matthews & Crow, 2003). Like leadership, ideas and expectations of principal leadership have experienced a metamorphosis over the past century (Seifert & Vornberg, 2002). Effective principals were once described as those who ran a tight ship (DuFour & Eaker, 1998). These leaders, according to DuFour and Eaker, were expected to ensure good behavior among students and maintain the budgets and teacher contracts in their schools. This autocratic leadership emerged as a force of strong, dynamic, and assertive individuals with a top-down model of administration.

Where the principal was once expected to direct teachers and coordinate educational resources, that role is now one of meeting the challenges of the system and moving schools toward their established missions through the fostering of mutual cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth among the members of the organization (Seifert & Vornberg, 2002). Principals are now being asked to nurture the development of learning, professional, and caring communities based on the participation of all members of the school communities (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Sergiovanni, 2005).

The role of principal, however, cannot be considered without understanding how the education system and school administration has evolved over the ages and how this
development has affected society (Seifert & Vornberg, 2002). Murphy (1998) described this evolution in four distinct eras over the last century.

*Ideological Era (1820-1899)*

School administration has a long history, yet, in the early days, was virtually unrecognized as an essential component of school function and process. It was not until after the Civil War that the actual numbers of school administrators became significant. During this Ideological Era, educators of the age were in search of an ‘ideal’ education. Callahan and Button (1964) and Button (1966) identified two doctrines of school leadership: the doctrine of administration as the teaching of teachers, which simply means that administration was supervision; and the doctrine of administration as applied philosophy, which emphasized wisdom and moral judgment and actually bestowed upon school administrators a similar status of a clergyman. In fact, Seifert and Vornberg stated that American schools, along with religious institutions, were the center of the community, establishing its values and social climate.

The principal as a caring, nurturing, and an ethical individual stems from this ideological age when these values and beliefs often required that public school leaders were to be active members of the Protestant church (Matthews & Crow, 2003). As the Catholic Church built strong parochial schools, this religious influence created a picture of the principal which linked “timeless truths and values” (Beck & Murphy, 1993, p. 15). It was because of this religious heritage that the very concept of ethics began (Howlett, 1991). In fact, Harris and Lowery (2003) pointed out that school policies are, oftentimes, a result of “value-laden” choices.
Prescriptive Era (1900-1950)

As the 20th century approached, educational leadership shifted from ideology to one of prescription with a knowledge base comprised of folklore, testimonials, and speculation. In this era, known as the Prescriptive Era, recognition of the scientific management movement in the corporate world began (Murphy, 1998). Prior to this time, virtually no systematic study of management existed (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2000). Frederick W. Taylor’s work consisted of scientific analysis to identify the most efficient way to perform a task, and he felt that time study for setting standards, separation of managerial and employee duties, and incentive systems would maximize worker productivity (Lunenburg & Ornstein).

Literature about the practice of school leaders from 1900-1950 reflected the social and cultural forces in American society (Cooper & Boyd, 1987). Scientific management and industrial efficiency precepts of the times encouraged the establishment of a business approach to educational organizations and included carefully planned work schedules, work instructions, and expected standards of performance (Cooper & Boyd).

With these principles and work ethics in conjunction with the growth of cities and schools, a new form of principalship was fashioned. Superintendents, who managed and evaluated the schools, could not keep up with the added demands this increase in population constituted (Matthews & Crow, 2003). Logically, the job of local school management shifted to the principals. The emergence of the principalship free of teaching duties created a supervisory role for principals and, consequently, laid the foundation of the Scientific Era of education.
It was the Scientific Era which actually shaped the evolution of school leadership into what present day educators know and expect of principals, focusing on the development of professional standards of performance (Willower, 1983). The Scientific Era, a movement intended to establish educational leadership using scientifically supported knowledge in the field, introduced the concept of educational leadership which linked theory and research to professional practice and included the behavioral sciences in its approaches.

Although early 20th century educational researchers advised school leaders to develop positive community relationships, the last two decades have seen an even stronger influence in the principal’s role toward one of a social reconstructionist (Matthews & Crow, 2003). This, however, has had some negative connotations, insinuating that this role of the principal might be associated with that of a politician (Matthews & Crow). During the last half of the 20th century, however, politicians and educators have indeed collaborated on many issues in both politics and in the world of education (Matthews & Crow).

Just as politics and society have changed over the last two decades, so have schools. Therefore, the efforts of principal effectiveness, once again, changed as the reform movements of the 1980s affected the role of principal to one of instructional leader (Matthews & Crow, 2003). In 1983, when the National Commission on Excellence in Education declared the United States a “nation at risk,” student achievement in our schools became the central focus of our educational system and the cornerstone of
education reform. This shift in attention to student achievement spurred the investigation of other areas of education, one of which was the area of educational leadership.

*Dialectic Era (1986-Present)*

With its beginning in 1986, educational leadership in the Dialectic Era has attempted to gain a functional knowledge base that is required of today’s principals in order to improve the profession and provide alternative visions to manage and cope with problems of the occupation (Murphy, 1998). The focal point of educational, or instructional leadership today, is the movement toward a professional school model, practice-based learning experiences, and renewed emphasis on values, social context, and new forms of leadership (Murphy).

Sergiovanni (2005) referred to leadership as comprised of three dimensions: head, hand, and heart. The head of leadership must entail the theories of teaching and learning, organization and management, and behavior. Putting these theories into practice is the hand of leadership. However, leadership from the heart is leadership which encompasses one’s personal values and beliefs; and when the head and hand together are not powerful enough to account for what leadership is, and, when faced with situations that cause conflict within the three dimensions, the heart takes over, making decisions corresponding to one’s values and beliefs (Sergiovanni). This foundation of leadership ethics is most powerful, but with very little empirical basis in theory.

Though few studies have been conducted on ethical leadership, ethics has been considered one of the greatest attributes of good leaders from the beginning of man (Beck & Murphy, 1993; Harris & Lowry, 2003; Howlett, 1991; Matthew & Crow, 2003;

Contemporary Principal Leadership

Just as ethical leadership has moved in succession through the centuries, the understanding of school leadership has moved in cycles in recent years (Sergiovanni, 2005). Sergiovanni stated that while instructional leadership was the focus of the 1980s, the 1990s focused on instructional leaders who developed quality teachers. Once again, Sergiovanni continued, since 2000, principals have focused on being instructional leaders who bring quality to the teaching field through the development of communities of learners. “Instructional leadership is the equivalent of the holy grail in educational administration” (Elmore, 2000, p. 7).

Although the term “instructional leader” has been used to describe the desired model for education leader, according to Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, and Wahlstrom (2004), it still remains undefined as far as a set of leadership practices goes. Literature involving “leadership by adjective” (p. 4) leaves room for skepticism in that some adjectives describing leadership mask the true theme of successful leadership, that theme being “helping the organization set a defensible set of directions and influencing members to move in those directions” (Leithwood et al., p. 4).

Such leadership requires that principals must be in tune with the concept of the big picture of change (Fullan, 2002). Fullan’s adjective for these “principals of the future” is Cultural Change Principals. Cultural Change Principals are those who have enthusiasm, energy, and hope, and are characterized by their moral purpose, an understanding of the change process, the ability to expand and develop relationships, the
ability to create and share knowledge, and the capability of maintaining cohesiveness among those involved in the reform (Fullan).

DuFour’s (2002) idea of contemporary leadership coincides with Sergiovanni’s (2005) and Fullan’s (2002) changing roles of principalship by using the term learning-centered leadership. According to DuFour, principals are shifting from the role of teaching-centered to learning-centered with a focus on leadership of a professional community. The learning-centered principal is an educational leader who promotes the success of students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture conducive to student learning and staff professional growth (Council of Chief State School Officers, 1996) (CCSSO). Developing a strong culture in schools in this way, energizes schools and lights the way for other initiatives (King, 2001).

Principal Competency

The evolution of the principalship has not come without added demands and responsibilities to this leadership role (Thompson & Legler, 2003). Though society’s view of the principal is now one that is grounded in cognitive development (Hart, 1999), the principal remains the school manager and facilitator who is also accountable for instructional improvement, curriculum design and implementation, staff development, decision-making plans, discipline, and school safety (Ferrandino, 2000).

Since the passage of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 ([NCLB], United States Department of Education, USDOE, 2001), America’s public education is more dependent than ever before on the nation’s principals to lead its schools through new state and federal mandates and to ensure that all children receive a quality education (Owings, Kaplan, & Nunnery, 2005). Considering that the retirement age of principals in Georgia
has decreased in recent years holds many implications, one being that principals are entering their leadership roles at much younger ages than in earlier generations, suggesting that some are becoming principals with little experience (Afolabi, Nweke, & Stephens, 2003). The impending principal shortage becomes even more complex considering that districts are also reporting a shortage of qualified principal candidates. Afolabi et al. stated that with the new demands of NCLB, it is imperative that Georgia school systems hire not only highly qualified teachers, but highly qualified, or competent, leaders as well.

Defining competent principals has been ambiguous at best. Papa, Lankford, and Wyckoff (2002) stated that formulating a definition of an effective principal is difficult in that the role of the principal is multifaceted. Despite this difficulty, certain attributes characterize effective principals. Four basic qualities identified by researchers explained that competence, vision, perseverance, and an ability to create an effective school organizational culture have been recognized as characteristics of effective leaders (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Papa et al.; Sweeney, 1982). Much recent research argues that effective principals are autonomous in leading their schools, but at the same time, accountable for student performance (Papa et al.).

Principal Competency and Student Achievement

Although there is little disagreement among educators and researchers today that principals, indeed, impact the lives of children (Hallinger & Heck, 1996), the idea of principals being held accountable for student achievement continues to cause much question and controversy (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Owings et al., 2005; Thompson & Legler, 2003). Much of this stems from the disagreement about the
numerous principal leadership constructs (Hallinger et al.; Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995). Before the effects of principal instructional leadership on student achievement can be measured, the ambiguity of such constructs must be investigated, including both the direct and indirect effects of principal leadership. This is dependent on conceptions of the principal’s role in school effectiveness (Hallinger et al.).

**Direct Model**

In Owings’ et al. (2005) study of principal quality and student achievement in Virginia, direct and indirect models of principal effectiveness were considered in interpreting school leadership’s effect on student achievement. Direct models are models of leadership that use data driven decision-making in improving student achievement and provide safe and orderly school environments for the school community (Edmonds, 1979).

Decision-making has a significant influence on the performance of the faculty, staff, and students, and, ultimately, the effectiveness of the leader (Green, 2001). Wade (2001) maintained that data are the link between teaching practices and student performance and that decision-making should be based on carefully collected data on effective strategies to improve teaching and learning. Data show strengths and weaknesses in students’ knowledge and provides guidance on which teaching practices should be continued, altered, or discontinued. The most useful types of data to drive the process of school improvement are statistical data providing evidence of the success or failure of educational programs and includes student assessment data, student demographic data, perceptions data, and school program data. However, data are only useful if administrators and faculties utilize it in their practices. They must recognize the
benefits of the data before their schools may be able to set common goals for improving student achievement (Wade, 2001).

A second indicator of principal competency which has a direct effect on students is a principal’s ability to provide a safe learning environment for students (Edmonds, 1979). In a research synthesis on effective school leadership, Sweeney (1982) sought to determine if schools with high achievement exhibit particular leadership behavior. Seven of the eight studies Sweeney analyzed proved that an orderly environment conducive to learning was deemed necessary for students to succeed and was a determining factor in effective leadership behavior.

More recently, research has shown that small, structured, and caring learning environments promote safety and success (Kaplan & Owings, 2000). This may be accomplished through limiting the number of students within each classroom. When this is not feasible, teachers and school leaders should create the “feel” of a small school inside, as well as outside, the classroom by personalizing their environments, focusing on individualized instruction, and creating and fostering strong relationships (Kaplan & Owings). The more personalized the learning environment, the greater the likelihood of creating a safe and nurturing atmosphere that directly supports student learning (Kaplan & Owings).

*Indirect Model*

Directly related to improved student achievement, Hallinger and Heck (1996) concluded, is internal school processes. Interestingly, the variables which make up these processes, ranging from school policy and norms to practices of teachers, are considered indirect models of leadership. Furthermore, Hallinger and Heck’s examples of school
policy and norms (academic expectations, school mission, student opportunity to learn, instructional organization, and academic learning time) encompass principal quality, with the most significant factor interacting with principal leadership being school goals.

Owings et al. (2005) adds other variables that comprise indirect models of leadership. In addition to working with the school community to establish a common mission and instructional vision and in creating a collaborative school culture which facilitates continuous school improvement, the principal’s role involves selecting and retaining quality teachers (Owings et al.). It also involves improving, or even removing, low performing teachers.

The variables which comprise indirect models of leadership also contribute to instructional quality (Owings et al.). In their study of principal effectiveness on student reading achievement, Hallinger, Bickman, and Davis (1996) combined characteristics of quality principals within a framework of antecedents and student outcomes to measure principal effectiveness. Their most substantive discovery concerned the relation between principal leadership and school-level instructional procedures, but they also concluded that the direct and/or indirect effects of leadership on student achievement were inconsequential. Owings et al. (2005) concurred with this finding stating that the principal plays a vital role in fostering student achievement whether it is direct or indirect, as the nation’s schools contend with the high-stakes testing associated with NCLB.

Principal Evaluation

Even before NCLB and the age of accountability, principal evaluation existed to encourage communication between principals and superintendents by making known
principals’ needs and facilitating goal setting (Weiss, 1989). The majority of superintendents before 1990 considered principal evaluations a motivating factor in school improvement agreeing that principals indeed improved as a result of evaluations (Weiss). Although many educators agree that principals’ performance improves as a result of evaluation and that principals are critical to school success, the evaluation of principals has not gained much attention in recent years (Lashway, 2003). In fact, Johnson (1996) confirmed that, in most settings, principal evaluations have lacked written documentation, and an intuitive approach to evaluation has been taken, rather than a performance-based approach.

An instrument used in Georgia to evaluate its leaders for the past 13 years is the Georgia Leadership Evaluation Program (Georgia Department of Education, GADOE, 1992). The Georgia Leadership Evaluation Instrument (GLEI) is mandated to evaluate the annual performance of all educators who are required by the Georgia Board of Education to have a leadership certificate – its purpose, “to encourage improved performance through continual professional development by identifying areas of strength and weakness in assigned performance areas” (p. 3). It allows immediate supervisors to evaluate their employees’ performance based on the implementation and completion of assigned responsibilities. Performance indicators used in evaluating Georgia principals include such areas as curriculum, staff performance, academic focus, communication, organizational setting, and comprehensive improvement plans. Another very important performance area on the GLEI is the area of student performance. Principals are evaluated on this area by their assessment implementation and reporting procedures and by their use of assessment results in improving instruction.
With the mounting pressure to increase student achievement, and since student test data have become an accepted measure of student performance, new thinking has been generated about principal evaluation, especially since the passage of No Child Left Behind (Lashway, 2003). Conflicting opinions on accountability in this age of high-stakes testing have brought about teacher and administrator shortages and have redefined the course of education (Ferrandino, 2001). The painful consequences of failure to raise test scores and reduce the number of dropouts have meant denial of school accreditation, state takeover, and even school closure (Duke, 2004). While researchers argue that students are more than test scores, school systems are being held accountable for student performance, and, in the end, principals, as leaders of the schools, are responsible for student success (Duke; Ferrandino, 2001; Hart, 1999; Magnuson, 1999).

Gathering evidence that principal leadership impacts student achievement has stemmed numerous studies that are aimed at identifying measurable indicators of leadership that are linked to student performance (Hallinger et al., 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Leithwood et al., 2004; Owings et al., 2005; Papa et al., 2002; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003). A meta-analysis on 30 years of research completed on principals’ effects on student achievement identified 21 principal leadership responsibilities, practices, knowledge, strategies, and tools which linked leadership to quantitative student achievement data (Waters et al.). With the average correlation of leadership on student achievement being .25, these 21 leadership responsibilities are essential in moving schools forward to affect change (Waters et al.). Furthermore, Owings et al. (2005) considered that by connecting consistent principal leadership
practices with school performance, school leadership can gain important data about their professional effectiveness.

State of Georgia and Student Achievement

Professional effectiveness and student success in the state of Georgia has become an all consuming issue for educational leaders in recent years as No Child Left Behind has affected whether or not a school is labeled successful or failing. In 2004, State accountability test results showed gains in meeting standards for attendance. However, of the 2,028 public schools tested in Georgia, 442 schools failed to meet the law’s standards (GADOE, 2004).

Although 2004 Criterion Referenced Curriculum Test (CRCT) scores have seen an increase from previous years in the elementary and middles school levels, disappointing results on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) warrant awareness for educators and administrators as they prepare Georgia’s students for high school and for the future. Scores on the GHSGT remained consistent with the scores from the previous year at either a one point increase or decrease in scores (GADOE, 2004). The GADOE emphasized that the stagnant results on the GHSGT are cause for dramatic changes in the education system.

Though quality teaching has been stressed as the No Child Left Behind Act has been implemented, time is needed for improvement to be institutionalized. Georgia has formed a partnership with the Georgia’s Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) that is devoted to helping educational leaders in Georgia meet elevated expectations for student achievement and school performance (Georgia’s Leadership
Institute for School Improvement, n.d.). These elevated expectations for student and school success have been integral in the definition of the role of principalship today.

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards

What has become known as effective leadership, based on productive schools and student outcomes, has warranted a universal definition of principal effectiveness (Boeckmann & Dickinson, 2001). Lashway (2003) reported that examinations of principal evaluation instruments throughout the United States have shown an inconsistency in evaluation practices. In an age of accountability, where students, and even teachers, are being judged on test performance, and performance standards, measuring principal effectiveness in relation to student performance has been difficult, if not impossible, without a set of standards for leaders (CCSSO, 1996).

Based on the work on standards in other areas of educational reform, standards provided an especially appropriate and powerful leverage point for reform that linked standards to practice, but, in the area of educational leadership, a major void existed – there were no common standards (CCSSO). In November of 1996, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), formed by the CCSSO, released the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders. The ISLLC initiative (CCSSO, 1996), begun in August of 1994, was an initiative whose objectives were to link educational leadership and productive schools and to seek out significant trends in society and education that hold implications for emerging views of leadership. Shipman and Veir (1999) stated that the consortium had two purposes: (a) to reshape the concepts of school leadership and (b) to raise the level of expertise among school leaders.
The Consortium consisted of representatives from 24 states and organizations and drew on the research about productive leadership and the knowledge of the representatives themselves (CCSSO, 1996). It was determined that these efforts could best be guided by a set of the following seven principals:

- Standards should reflect the centrality of student learning
- Standards should acknowledge the changing role of the school leader
- Standards should recognize the collaborative nature of school leadership
- Standards should be high, upgrading the quality of the profession
- Standards should inform the performance-based systems of assessment and evaluation for school leaders
- Standards should be integrated and coherent, and
- Standards should be predicated on the concepts of access, opportunity, and empowerment for all members of the school community.

The CCSSO (1996) acknowledged that formal leadership in schools and school districts is a complex, multi-faceted task and that standards recognize that effective leaders often have different patterns of beliefs and act differently from the norm in the profession. Because the CCSSO considered the standards approach to provide the best avenues to allow stakeholders to drive improvement efforts in licensure, program approval, and candidate assessment, the Consortium compiled a set of standards and knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators for each standard that, when properly employed, promote the success of all students (CCSSO). These standards are:
Standard 1
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Standard 2
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Standard 3
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Standard 4
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Standard 5
A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.
Standard 6

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context (CCSSO, 1996, pp. 10-21).

The common core of standards should be used to inform program instructional content, as well as an assessment tool for administrative licensure and/or advanced certification (CCSSO, 1996). The Education Commission of the States (1998) emphasized that this accountability for school leaders was not established just to “fix” responsibility, but to generate data that is essential to student learning.

*ISLLC Standards Indicators*

With the creation of the ISLLC standards, a common base of knowledge, dispositions, and performances for school leaders has, at long last, established a means of proficiency previously non-existent in the field of education (Thomson, 1998) with specific behaviors that educational leaders need in order to be successful (Sharp, Walter, & Sharp, 1998). The CCSSO (1996) called these specific behaviors performances, and have listed 94 indicators that represent the behaviors needed to be reflective, effective educational leaders. These indicators are all addressed in five areas of educational leadership behaviors that Green (2001) suggested must be evident in effectively fulfilling his/her roles and responsibilities: decision making, communication, change, conflict management, and the establishment of an effective teaching and learning climate.

Leadership indicators such as those included in the ISLLC standards focus on effective practices of school leaders; however, the development and adoption of standards are ineffectual without reviews of these practices (Barnett, 2003). It is not the knowledge
of effective leadership practices that bring about improved student achievement, but the actual practices of school leaders themselves. It is the working knowledge of standards and indicators that has the greatest impact on P-12 education (Barnett).

**ISLLC Standards and Student Achievement**

The effectiveness of the efforts put forth from the individuals in an organization is preceded only by the active involvement and concerted initiatives of the school administrator (National Staff Development Council, 2003). This belief that student achievement is linked to the active involvement of the school administrator has been a major issue during the past decade. Numerous studies (Coutts, 1997; Huffman & Jacobson, 2003; Waters & Grubb, 2004; Waters et al., 2005) have been launched with the intentions of linking student achievement to educational leadership with the premise that students perform superiorly in schools with strong educational leaders. Specific principal leadership responsibilities and practices have been identified that distinguish the essential responsibilities from those important in correlating student achievement and change leadership (Waters et al.).

In identifying the essentials, Waters et al. (2005) acknowledged that principals assume a multitude of responsibilities that are important in running a school but are not essential to student learning. These essentials demand a paradigm shift in leadership practices from simply maintaining and managing the school building and finances to improving student achievement. Furthermore, Waters et al. advocated that when school leaders focused on school and classroom practices that promote student learning, they positively affect student achievement. Through the ISLLC standards and their knowledge, dispositions, and performance indicators, Murphy, Yff, and Shipman (2000)
emphasized the necessity for this shift in approaching educational leadership from managing schools to raising school administrators’ expertise and their efforts in promoting success for all students. Although Lashway (1998) suggested that standards for principals may be construed as a symbolic commitment to quality instead of a guide for daily decision making, Hessel and Holloway (2003) claimed that the ISLLC standards have redefined the role of the principal – that role being the principal who focuses on teaching, learning, and success for all students.

Statement of the Problem

The role of principal has evolved over the years from the role of being a leader who was expected to supervise and ensure proper conduct among students, managing and maintaining the functions of the school, to that of being a leader who establishes the mission of the school while fostering mutual cooperation, support, and personal growth among the faculty and staff and ensuring that students will succeed. As these changes in principal expectations have cultivated, the need for unanimity among educators defining effective principalship demanded the need for a common set of standards.

The ISLLC standards were created for this purpose – to redefine existing concepts of school leadership and to produce proficient and capable school leaders that ensure student success. Although the ISLLC standards have established a set of common standards that express the knowledge, dispositions, and performance indicators that comprise effective educational leaders, linking these standards to effective practices has been difficult. Considering that the principalship has been in existence long before the ISLLC standards were established, so have effective principals. Therefore, validating that effective principals are effective because they lead by the guidance of the ISLLC
standards is undocumented. Furthermore, unknown to educational researchers is the knowledge all effective leaders have of the ISLLC standards.

In addition to the already ambiguous and demanding role of effective principalship, the passage of No Child Left Behind introduced to school leadership the issue of accountability. Although the supposition that student success was ultimately the responsibility of the principal, this implicit belief had not challenged principal quality until then. In spite of this, studies have been conducted for many years with the intent to link principal effectiveness and student achievement. Researchers have failed to show statistically significant evidence that school leadership indeed impacts student achievement, yet high performing schools tend to have principals that possess the characteristics of effective principals.

However, a study recently completed in the state of Virginia by Owings, Kaplan, and Nunnery (2005) obtained significant results linking principal quality to student achievement and concentrated on specific attributes of leadership by using a rubric based on the ISLLC Standards for evaluating principals’ practices. In view of the history and defining role of the principalship, effective principal practice, and the basis of the ISLLC standards, it is reasonable to assume that if principals in practice today have adequate knowledge of the ISLLC standards, the competency of the principalship will be improved and/or enhanced. It is equally reasonable to assume that if principal competency is heightened, student achievement will increase, too.

Due to the fact that Georgia’s public education system has a high number of schools that did not meet adequate yearly progress (AYP), and, to the researcher’s knowledge, no study has been done on the competency of principals in Georgia, no
conclusive data were available that disclosed explanations of why some Georgia students and schools are failing, but leadership could be one of the many factors. In fact, Georgia, being one of the 24 states and organizations that constituted the Consortium which constructed the ISLLC standards, has not required its leaders to be licensed according to the standards.

Therefore, in light of these findings and presumptions, the researcher’s purpose for this study was to determine if principal competency as defined by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards predict student achievement in public high schools in Georgia.

Research Questions

A study (Owings et al., 2005) conducted in the state of Virginia found a significant relationship between principal quality and student achievement. This researcher, therefore, in a similar study, sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does principal competency, as determined by the ISLLC standards, predict overall student achievement?

2. To what extent does the impact of principal competency on student achievement depend on the number of students who are on free and reduced-price lunches?

3. Are principals with lower principal competency placed in schools with lower socioeconomic levels?

4. To what extent does the impact of principal competency on student achievement depend on principal experience in the school?
Significance of the Study

Several groups within the state of Georgia and outside the state of Georgia would benefit from a research study of principal competency, the ISLLC standards, and student achievement in Georgia. These groups would include superintendents throughout school systems in the state of Georgia as well as those in other states, current and aspiring principals, the Georgia Department of Education, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission, and institutions of higher education. The researcher’s findings would provide knowledge of principal competency to superintendents throughout the state of Georgia that would, in turn, substantiate a need for educational leaders in the state, as well as in other states, to challenge leadership preparation programs and principal evaluation programs.

The researcher’s findings from this study would benefit current and aspiring principals as they form or execute their guiding principles in schools throughout Georgia and the nation. Benefits to the Georgia Department of Education and the Professional Standards Commission would include the data input and their results as each variable is examined for association with what is the ultimate objective of education – student learning. Data collected by the researcher may enable the researcher to assist educational leaders in the state in considering the effectiveness of existing evaluation practices of current educational leaders as well as the quality of their leadership. Finally, the identification of leadership competencies that promote student learning would assist institutions of higher education in the training and induction of current and aspiring educational leaders.
It is the goal of this researcher to continue to engage in a leadership role in the education system of Georgia, but it is just as much an aspiration of this researcher to make an attempt at raising the level of consciousness of quality principalship in the state of Georgia. Through this study of competent principals, the ISLLC standards, and student achievement in Georgia, the researcher may acquire knowledge that principal competency, as measured by ratings on the ISLLC standards predicts student achievement in Georgia high schools. The acquisition of this knowledge would assist the researcher in preparation for, and attainment of, future career goals. Furthermore, this knowledge would be useful to educational researchers as they seek to find systems and approaches that improve student learning.

Procedures

Research Design

The researcher’s purpose was to complete a similar study to one completed in Virginia (Owings et al., 2005) to determine if competent principals in Georgia, as measured by an ISLLC standards survey, have an impact on student achievement in Georgia schools. Although Owings et al. used a quantitative design in their Virginia study, this researcher used quantitative and qualitative data collection to complete this study, making it a mixed-method design. Leedy and Ormrod (2003) declared that what makes quantitative research so appealing is that it examines situations as they are, unchanged and unmodified. Qualitative data adds dimension to the quantitative data to get a complete understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Leedy & Ormrod). This researcher examined principals in the state of Georgia as they are today and related their
competency as determined by a survey based on the ISLLC standards and by follow-up interviews with superintendents.

The survey that was used was used in a study in Kentucky to determine leadership qualities and the frequency of practice of the ISLLC performance indicators between graduates of Morehead State University and non-Morehead State University graduates (Barnett, 2004). Survey research methods, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999), are preferred for collecting data and describing the variability of certain characteristics or attributes of a population statistically in order to make inferences about a large group of people.

Although the reliability and validity of the instrument used in this study to collect the quantitative data was authenticated by the fact that it has been used in a previously published study, permission was requested from Barnett (2004) to include the questions that were used in the survey. Prior to administration, the instrument was reviewed by educators closely involved with the ISLLC standards to ensure that the instrument is aligned with the intent of the professional standards. The survey was tested to ensure reliability and validity for use in this study by having two assistant principals in the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools complete the survey, evaluating their lead administrators.

**Population**

The target population of the study comprised 181 public school superintendents from the state of Georgia. However, since some districts in the state do not have high schools, this number was reduced to 171 school superintendents. The investigator was interested in determining how principals’ leadership competency affects student
achievement; therefore, principals were the unit of analysis while superintendents were key informants.

A random sample of principals was used so that one high school from each district was represented. Experience and principal’s continuity were critical factors in indicating the principal’s success and the impact of that principal on student achievement (Owings et al., 2005). Therefore, the random selection only included principals who had been at the same school for at least three consecutive years.

*Data Collection*

A proposal was sent to the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Georgia Southern University for approval before conducting the research study. Following approval from the IRB, the principals in each district, chosen through a random selection, were sent a letter electronically explaining this study and asking for their permission to be used in this study. When some did not respond, two distributions following the first were sent, each mailing acquiring more responses. A survey, used in Barnett’s study (2004) on educational leaders in Kentucky and based on the ISLLC standards to assess principal competency, provided a common language for defining the role of the school leader as defined by the ISLLC Standards. This survey, somewhat modified to fit this study and created on Survey Monkey (SurveyMonkey.com, 2006), was sent electronically in a letter to the superintendents of the principals who gave permission to be used in this study. The letter explained the purpose of the study and contained the survey link. The superintendents were asked to click on the link to the survey and rate the principals using the ISLLC standards survey instrument.
The ultimate goal of survey research is to acquire information about large populations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005), and mailing surveys electronically allows the researcher to be able to reach individuals that have easy access to a computer and the Internet (Lyons, Cude, Gutter, & Lawrence, 2003). Superintendents who did not respond to the survey were mailed another letter electronically encouraging participation in the research study with a survey attachment. Minimal response was gained through the electronic mailings, so a hard copy of the letter and the survey was sent through the United States Postal Service.

Follow-up interviews were also conducted using an interview instrument containing 13 items to capture a deeper view of superintendents’ perceptions of principal competency – more than could be obtained from a questionnaire or survey. The semistructured interviews ranged in duration between 45 minutes and 1 hour and 30 minutes were tape-recorded in order to gain themes and patterns from the data.

Data Analysis

The data received from the survey instrument was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 12.0. The SPSS software was used by the researcher to describe and analyze the research data. A principal components analysis used to create a composite index for principal competency, the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (poverty level), and the principals’ years of experience in the schools were the independent variables. Principals were then grouped into four equal-sized groups (quartiles) based upon this factor score. Quartile ranges will be Q1 (low quality ratings) to Q4 (high quality ratings). The percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch was also grouped into quartiles Q1 (low
poverty) to Q4 (high poverty). The principals’ years of experience in the schools were grouped into quartiles, as well, according to the distribution of the data with Q1 including principals with the least experience in the schools to Q4 including principals with the most experience in the schools.

The dependent variable, or constant, in this study was student test scores. A principal component factor analysis was performed on the percentages of students’ passing scores on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (grade 11) in the areas of Language Arts and Mathematics to create a single, regression-based factor score for years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005. Using factor scores creates a single variable to represent school-level achievement (the dependent variable) and removed the aggregate linear trend in scores across years by making the mean school-level achievement score equal to 0 each year (Owings et al., 2005). The scores were then grouped into quartiles according to the distribution of the data and coded Q1 (low student achievement) to Q4 (high student achievement).

To test these relationships, simple and multiple linear regression were used with the four quartiles predicting student achievement. The data received from the survey instrument was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 12.0. The SPSS software was used by the researcher to describe and analyze the research data.

The five questions regarding demographic data were examined and coded into the data input. The two dichotomous questions on the survey were tallied, and the results are discussed in the data analysis. They were also reviewed by the researcher in the scoring
procedure and compared to the score of quantitative items 8 – 25 with the researcher noting similarities and discrepancies among the answers in the two sections of the survey.

Follow-up interviews were also conducted using an interview instrument containing 13 items that elaborated on some of the items on the survey. The interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Data analysis consisted of examining the responses for patterns, connections, and themes.

Limitations

The researcher perceives that one limitation is present within the study: The utilization of self reporting data may represent limitations to the study. Superintendents completing the ISLLC survey may not have been in their district for a period long enough to be familiar with the principals in the district. This may limit the insights obtained from them.

Delimitations

The delimitations that are present within the study are:

1. The researcher is aware that the results of the study are only generalizable to the state of Georgia.
2. The study is not an investigation or analysis of Georgia’s present evaluation program for principals.

Definition of Terms

Researchers define terms included in a study in order for readers to more fully understand their precise meaning (Creswell, 2003). The definitions of terms that will be used throughout the study are:
1. **Accountability** - Each school district must prepare and disseminate annual local report cards that include information on how students in the district and in each school performed on state assessments. These reports must state student performance in terms of three levels: basic, proficient and advanced, and achievement data must be disaggregated by student subgroups according to race, ethnicity, gender, English language proficiency, migrant status, disability status and low-income status. The report cards must also state the schools which have been identified as needing improvement, corrective action or restructuring (USDOE, 2005).


3. **NCLB** - No Child Left Behind is the bipartisan education reform effort proposed by President Bush and passed into law by Congress on January 8, 2002. NCLB reauthorized the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965 and is built on four principles: accountability for results, more choices for parents, greater local control and flexibility, and an emphasis on doing what works based on scientific research (USDOE, 2005).

   **Summary**

   The establishment of public education for the good of the people has, in itself, been the cause for the numerous changes which have occurred through the years in the role education plays in our society and in the role of the principal as this leader who
guides these changes. From the autocratic leader who simply directs teachers and manages the school facility, to the nurturing leader who develops caring communities within the school and takes charge of student success, the role of principal cannot be underestimated in this age of student academic accountability. With the creation of the ISLLC standards, a common knowledge base that defined proficiency in the field of educational leadership was established, offering a set of specific behaviors which serve as a guide that are proven to be successful in leadership practice and student success.

A survey based on a framework linking the ISLLC Standards to leadership practice was created and administered to superintendents throughout the state of Georgia in order to determine a relationship of principal competency and student achievement in the state of Georgia. Through the utilization of quantitative research methods, the researcher used the ratings on the ISLLC Standards survey to determine principal competency. Once principal competency was ascertained, student test scores were compared to establish a relationship between principal competency and student achievement. Further comparisons were conducted by the researcher to determine if factors other than principal competency alone can predict student achievement in a high school. Two other considerations were the number of students eligible for free and reduced-price lunch and the principals’ years of experience in the schools. Follow-up interviews of superintendents were conducted by the researcher to add depth and a more complete understanding of the phenomenon of principal competency.

The results of the analysis will benefit such groups as superintendents throughout school systems in the state of Georgia as well as those in other states, current and aspiring principals, the Georgia Department of Education, the Professional Standards
Commission, and institutions of higher education by providing knowledge of Georgia’s
current principals’ competency ratings, according to the ISLLC standards. The results
will also verify principals’ perceived effectiveness in their schools.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RESEARCH AND RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

The role of principal has changed through the years from a school leader who directed teachers and managed the processes of the school to the leader who nurtures and develops communities within the school that focus on student success. With the enactment of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the issue of accountability has integrated the process of education and has, consequently, added yet more responsibility onto the role of the principal.

With the implementation of standards-based education, the need for a set of common standards for educational leaders became apparent. With the creation of the ISLLC standards, a common knowledge base that defined proficiency in the field of educational leadership was established, offering a set of specific behaviors which serve as a guide that are proven to be successful in leadership practice and student success.

Determining a relationship of principal quality and student achievement may be one approach that will help schools in Georgia improve education and increase student scores on state tests. Making educators aware of the qualities that directly, or indirectly, affect student success will help higher institutions and school districts prepare educational leaders for leading schools in this age of accountability. Viewing leadership through the ages and what styles and approaches have been most effective in successful organizations is important in determining quality leadership today.
History of Leadership

The intriguing topic of leadership has captivated people’s attention for centuries with its study tracing back to Aristotle (Northouse, 2004). Around the turn of the 20th century, when industrialization was dawning, management, Northouse stated, was created as a way to operate organizations effectively and efficiently by planning, organizing, staffing, and controlling. However, “the ability to manage well doesn’t make much difference if you’re not even in the ‘right jungle’” (Covey, 1989, p. 147). Doing the right thing, Covey added, makes all the difference. Leithwood expands on this concept through his contention that leaders do right things right even in the construction of change (Leithwood, 2004). While management is about seeking order and stability and is prevalent and necessary in providing consistency to organizations today, leadership seeks to help organizations in adapting and constructing change (Northouse).

Northouse (2004) identified as many as 65 different classification systems that define the constituencies of leadership, but despite the numerous conceptualizations of leadership, only a few are identified by Northouse as central components: that leadership is a process, it involves influence, it occurs within a group context, and it involves goal attainment. These components define the term leadership which Northouse expresses as “a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal” (p. 3). Leithwood (2004) concurred, stating that two functions of leadership are setting directions and exercising influence.

One of the first systematic attempts to study leadership in the early part of the 20th century included leadership as a trait, suggesting that certain people have inherent qualities that make them leaders (Northouse, 2004). Leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi,
Abraham Lincoln, and Napoleon exhibited characteristics that were inborn and were possessed by only “great” people. Yet, as the century progressed, these “great man” theories were challenged. For example, in 1955, Katz attempted to address leadership as a set of skills which were developable in the knowledge and abilities that are needed to be an effective leader. Kerr, Schriesheim, Murphy, and Stogdill (1974), as well, argued that no consistent set of traits could actually distinguish leaders from non-leaders and that leadership was about the behavior of a leader. Harry S. Truman denied that he was a born leader, and, in fact, believed himself to be an ordinary man (Axelrod, 2004). It was his contention, however, that the ordinary man was the backbone of America (Axelrod).

Based on Stogdill’s findings in 1948, researchers at Ohio State University and the University of Michigan and Blake and Mouton, as well, conducted a series of studies that concentrated on leadership behavior (Northouse, 2004). This “style” approach to leadership determined that leadership is based on two types of behaviors, task and relationship, and has been the foundation of many more leadership approaches. Fiedler’s development of the contingency theory in the 1960s, for example, is based on the premise that the leader’s style matches the right setting and provides the framework for effective leadership (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974).

Leadership styles, according to Fiedler and Chemers (1974), are described as task motivated and relationship motivated. Northouse stated that the contingency theory is a theory that is based on much empirical research and is useful in determining the appropriate leadership style in given situations, but, Kerr et al. (1974) affirmed, it cannot tell why certain leadership styles are more effective in some situations than in others.
From the 1960s to the 1980s, leadership saw an evolution of motivational theories and approaches attempting to use leadership style which most complemented the needs of the subordinates in order to accomplish organizational goals; but it was in 1980 that Burns defined the role of the transformational leader. Transformational leaders motivate their subordinates to do more than they originally expected to do (Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2002), “liberating people to do what is required of them in the most effective and humane way possible” (DePree, 1989, p. 1). Lunenburg and Ornstein explained that they accomplish this by emphasizing their followers’ importance and value to the organization, by getting followers to forsake their own self-interest and focus on needs of the team or organization, and by helping subordinates reach self-actualization. An actual transformation takes place in the organization as the followers’ behavior and emotions are altered (Hall, 2002). The followers are even converted into leaders (Owens, 2004).

A most contemporary leadership style, mainly associated with the corporate world, is Collins’ (2001) Level 5 leader. With its basis on observation alone, little to no empirical evidence of Level 5 leadership is available, yet researchers (Collins; Fullan, 2003, 2005) recognize this leadership style as credible in that leaders move beyond transformational leadership to empowering and creating within an organization a constancy exemplar of leaders of leaders. These leaders must become servants and debtors, bearing the pain instead of inflicting it (DePree, 1989) whose commitments go beyond concern for how they affect the bottom line during their tenure, but how many leaders they leave behind and the legacy that is created (DePree; Fullan, 2003).
Principal Leadership

As the term transformational leadership was introduced to the world of education in the 1980s, the Age of Educational Reform had begun. With it came the expectations that the principal was a manager of human resources as well as an expert in human relations (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). This movement, synonymous with the reform of the principalship, challenged educational leadership in a changing culture that shaped the study and practice of educational leadership into a clearly focused mission-centered practice based on student learning. Two models of principalship which emerged from this reform movement which vie for the most attention among educational leaders are the instructional and transformational models (Leithwood, 2004). Where instructional leadership narrows the leaders’ focus to the core technology of their organizations, transformational leadership offers a broader, or systemic view of their work (Leithwood).

Being clear about the definition of principal leadership is essential in order to study the effects of principal leadership (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996). Prior to the 1980s, when the standards movement became the driving force in education, most empirical research on principals and principal effectiveness was based on general leadership behavior (Boyan, 1988). However, through Leithwood’s (2004) research, and as the idea of transformational leadership became a style of leadership that addressed the idea of a collaborative culture in school communities (Campo, 1993), three basic categories which characterize effective leadership practices were determined as the 20th century came to a close. These three categories are setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization (Leithwood).
Setting Directions

Establishing goals for an organization is critical in the success of the organization (Leithwood, 2004). Barkley, Bottoms, Feagin, & Clark (2001) emphasized that leaders in high-performing schools have a vision for their schools and the knowledge to make that vision become a reality. By focusing on the primary goal of increasing student success, and by continuously examining visions and beliefs about the future through building leadership capacity within the school community, large-scale improvements in student achievement may occur (Barkley et al.). Promoting the acknowledgment and favorable reception of group goals is a practice cited as helping set directions while offering meaningful purpose to those in the school community (Leithwood).

Part of setting directions involves exploring the possibility of change (Barkley et al., 2001). Change requires taking risks, however, and some of these risks include changing what is taught, how it is taught, and what is expected of students. Furthermore, it is up to the school leaders to emphasize new teaching strategies that address specific problems (Barkley et al.).

Setting directions towards instructional improvement requires training (Johnson, 1998). The assumption that sound directions for schools will occur without it is false, according to Johnson. Risk taking and planning to promote student achievement involves constant measurement and modifications (Barkley et al., 2001). Effective leaders frequently examine state and national test data and have their teachers do the same for the purpose of determining students’ performance and for future planning, visiting and revisiting the school’s vision to keep the perspective of all members of the school community in check (Barkley et al.).
Developing People

A clear vision of what a school wants to be or the direction it wants to take is not the only condition that must be present in order for a school to be successful (Leithwood, 2004). In order to productively move an organization in the direction of success, school leaders must know what is required to improve teaching and learning. This instructional leadership must go deeper than basic knowledge. Leithwood argued that educational leaders must have emotional intelligence, devoting personal attention to their employees to increase levels of optimism and enthusiasm.

A study conducted by Pashiardis in 2003 found that among the quality characteristics of effective principals, a common trait among all participants in the study was the exaggerated humane and emotional characteristics each exhibited when carrying out their leadership roles. The sense of egalitarianism each principal in this study used in their management style encouraged their employees by portraying a purpose, or vision, for all staff, including the principal, and appealed to the staff through their emotions and feelings (Pashiardis).

DePree (1989) considered leadership to be an art which is a weaving of relationships. A “relational trust” (Sergiovanni, 2005, p. 69) is produced when educational leaders take into account the emotions and feelings of teachers to produce an environment of leadership and learning together. Trust, being the tie that binds roles, is the springboard for the creation of role sets which embody reciprocity (Sergiovanni). Without these trusting relationships, Sergiovanni stated, the capacity for collaboration and learning are severely limited.
Redesigning the Organization

“Once born, organizations change” (Hall, 2002, p. 187), and, as DePree (1989) stated, they are always in a state of becoming. However, educational organizations are expected to be vehicles for change, educating students for an ever-changing world (Owens, 2004). An approach to increase the self-renewal capability of schools is organizational development, defined “organizational development” because change in learning organizations involves shaping, or developing, the climate and culture of the organization (Owens). Change deeply influences people’s attitudes and expectations about their organizational roles. Educational leaders cannot presume to change an organization without being involved in the change process themselves (Owens). Learning together involves distributing leadership throughout schools and school districts (Sergiovanni, 2005).

Letting go of power and control, however, is difficult for many principals in the process of change (Johnson, 1998). Though a vision for an organization is important, leaders who catalyze commitment to a standard instead of building enduring greatness in an organization limit the organization’s effectiveness (Collins, 2001; Fullan, 2005).

In Collins’ (2001) study of “great” companies compared to mediocre, those Level 5 leaders, the “great” leaders, were found to be ambitious, but not egocentric. They were driven with a zealousness that produced sustained results – those results that make an organization great, despite the difficulty of the change process. Furthermore, great leaders attribute the success of the organization to factors other than themselves and take responsibility when failure occurs (Collins). According to Hallinger and Heck (1996), the
essence of leadership is achieving results through others. DePree (1989) considered this leadership to be “abandoning oneself to the strengths of others” (p. xvi).

As Leithwood (2004) stated, successful educational leaders are those who develop their schools as supportive organizations which nurture and sustain the performance of teachers, students, and administrators (Leithwood, 2004). However, this development involves improvement. Elmore (2000) defined improvement as change in direction which, sustained over time, raises the average level quality of performance. Not only does it change school communities, it “moves entire systems” (Elmore, p. 13) through engaging people in analyzing their actions and understanding the rationale for taking these actions. Identifying exactly what leads to growth and which changes are successful is the key to understanding and controlling organizations (Hall, 2002).

To effectively move organizations through the change process and promote strategies which involve analyzing their work and their actions requires effective communication. Johnson’s (1998) study of principals going through the restructuring of a school district in an urban American school district reported that a missing ingredient in the reform process was a good system of communication within the district. Had there been effective communication, many may have been more supportive and motivated than they were (Johnson, 1998).

Principalship at the Different Academic Levels

Understanding and controlling schools is the challenge of an educational leader. An educational rationale that seeks to promote the personal and vocational development of everyone brings about successful change in schools (Owens, 2004). However,
successful change and principal impact varies throughout the academic levels (Owings et al., 2005).

*Principalship in the Elementary School*

Several qualities exemplify the leadership style of principals in successful schools (Sebring & Bryk, 2000). In their study of the Chicago reform of 1995, Sebring and Bryk found one underlying theme in Chicago’s elementary school principals: they skillfully used a combination of support and pressure to promote the efforts of adults who work directly with children. Four attributes of these elementary principals included a comprehensive and facilitative orientation, an institutional focus on student learning, efficient management, and a reliance on a combination of pressure and support to motivate others (Sebring & Bryk).

Motivating others is part of a value system innate in elementary principals (Sagnak, 2005). Personal values are difficult for principals to separate when creating and nurturing organizational values. The higher the level of congruence between personal and organizational values, the stronger the school culture and the greater the probability the school will achieve (Sagnak). In a study to determine levels of congruence between these two values, a congruence was found in relation to value dimensions of creativity, adaptability, cautiousness, social equality, autonomy, courtesy, humor, logic, obedience, aggressiveness, initiative, development, diligence, formality, orderliness, consideration, experimentation, forgiveness, moral integrity, fairness, openness, and broad-mindedness (Sagnak, 2005).

All of these characteristics and values play a role in motivating and influencing members of a school community. This topic of educational leadership instigated Jason’s
(2001) study on principal’s perception of influence. His study concluded that elementary principals perceive that the influence they have on student learning is due to various measures of influence. Among these areas of influence are shaping the school’s culture, obtaining parental involvement and support, providing an environment conducive to learning, enhancing professional development of staff, and developing and implementing instructional programs.

Anderson (1998) suggested that elementary principals have a strong conception of the impact technology has in the elementary school – even more so than secondary principals. In a study of more than 1,300 elementary and K-8 principals, one-third named improving staff performance, planning school improvement, improving student performance, or managing organizational change as their greatest developmental need (Doud & Keller, 1998). However, over half of the participants reported that understanding and applying technology is an elementary principal’s greatest need (Doud & Keller).

**Principalship in the Middle School**

Although the culture of the classroom learning environment is important to the middle school principal just as it is to an elementary school principal, middle school principals’ visits to the classroom are infrequent (Wood, 2005). Because middle schools are generally larger in size than elementary schools, the size may be an attributing factor to the infrequent classroom visits and to that fact that many principals delegate this duty to the assistant principal (Wood).

Even though principals do not make frequent classrooms visits, focus groups emphasizing student work are commonly emphasized by the middle school principal,
with regularly scheduled meetings for the teachers to examine student work (Wood, 2005). Brown and Anfara (2002) concluded in their study that the role of the middle level principal is shifting from traditional patterns of relationships to those connected to proficiency in promoting and supporting collegial, cooperative work. Most of the middle level principals in their study saw the need empower members of the school community so there is shared responsibility and a collegial, collaborative environment. Listening to others’ points of view and encouraging new ideas is the essence of the culture of a healthy learning environment (Brown & Anfara).

Principalship in the Secondary School

Secondary principals nurture the climate of the school and develop positive working relationships with staff through communication, sensitivity of needs, and appropriate support (Williams, 2001). However, they do not spend much time on instructional improvement and curriculum development. Instead, much of secondary principals’ efforts are spent supporting the policies of the school district (Williams).

Billot (2003) investigated what principals report they actually do compared with both what they would like to do, as well as what they believe their employers expect them to do. He found that, in a typical week, secondary principals spent the majority of their time completing management and administrative responsibilities. In an ideal week, they spend a great deal of time in activities of strategic leadership, education/curriculum leadership, management/administration and little time with student issues, parent/community issues, and staffing issues. Furthermore, Billot determined that over 90% of the principals identified “inspiring and visioning change for their schools” and “strong interpersonal/people skills” as the key skills in undertaking their roles. These
were supported by strong managerial and delegation skills. Most principals wished to “do the right thing.” Strengths that principals need to possess are being a hard worker, having a sense of humor, and being direct, but trustworthy, honest, and firm (Billot).

Williams’ (2001) study comparing teachers’ perceptions of principal effectiveness in secondary schools nominated for the National Secondary School Recognition Program (NSSRP) revealed that student relations, affective processes, and educational program scores nominated for the NSSRP were significantly higher than those from schools not nominated. Also, principals in schools nominated for the NSSRP provided better leadership skills in organizational development, working with personnel, and in providing organizational direction through goal attainment and establishing expectations and promoting appropriate change.

Reilly (2001) affirmed that high school principals must assure that teachers are knowledgeable about a variety of instructional techniques and how to use them with their diverse learners. This approach to effective and productive organizational change concurs with Collins’ (2001) good-to-great approach to productive organizations. Collins considered that effective organizations are built on the platform of the many talents in the organization. By getting “the right people on the bus” (p. 45) the members of the organization can figure out the best path to greatness.

Three primary responsibilities effective school leaders have in bringing a school organization from an ordinary one to a learner-centered school entail developing, maintaining, and enhancing a conducive learning environment (Reilly, 2001). Taking into consideration each student’s needs and learning styles along with encompassing high
expectations for students is essential in creating an environment that is flexible for program implementation (Reilly).

The principal's role has evolved into one which addresses issues among both the internal as well as external environments of the school community (Billot, 2003). Although structural and societal changes affected their role and workload, principals in Billot’s study still felt that being a principal made a difference for students, staff, and the community.

History of Education in Georgia

In examining Georgia’s educational system and leadership at present, understanding the history of education in Georgia gives a more clear perspective of its evolution. Although the state constitution of Georgia has stipulated public support of education since 1777, it was not until 1783 that the first government-supported high school in Georgia opened in Augusta (University of Georgia Press, 2005). Then, in 1789, the second state constitution omitted all references to public schools. When the third state constitution was written in 1798, however, an educational provision was included that permitted the legislature to establish local schools (Joiner, 1979). Years later, in 1822, a “poor school fund” was established that provided limited benefits; but in 1858, a more concerted effort was expounded to establish a statewide system for the white children in Georgia (University of Georgia Press).

The public school system recognized today, was established in the early 1870s when the legislature passed yet another act that established a system of public instruction, but it was not until 1945 that the State of Georgia Constitution included Article VIII which stated that “an adequate education for the citizens will be a primary obligation of
the state of Georgia, the expense of which shall be provided for by taxation” (Joiner, 1979, p. xx).

In spite of an earlier beginning, Georgia’s public education system is customarily dated to the Constitution of 1868 since this reconstructionist era produced one new and highly significant element in the public school movement – the need to educate children of former slaves (Joiner, 1979). This need, combined with the fact that Georgia was an impoverished state, Joiner continued, created difficulties with the re-emergence of the pre-Civil War public school movement.

Prior to the convention of December 1867, when the public education document was written that would reinstate public education in Georgia, 25 educators from various colleges and private schools in Georgia met to organize the Georgia Teachers Association, later known as the Georgia Education Association (Joiner, 1979). This committee made known the educational needs of the state and, Joiner stated, would be fundamental in the production of Georgia’s educational framework.

The law of 1870 would be the first legislation which provided for a State Board of Education and would give county boards of education complete control over the administration of schools within the confines of the general school laws (Joiner, 1979). The law of 1870 also gave the county boards the authority to elect a county school commissioner, but stated no educational qualifications for this office. Joiner affirmed that the office of commissioner was politically influenced and was a weak link in Georgia’s chain of educational needs. The year following, however, saw interesting changes in the educational qualifications and responsibilities of the county school superintendents.
School superintendents were required to write and pass the same examinations that teachers had to take and pass in order to receive certification (Joiner).

Decades later, in 1922, after many years of growth in a changing society, a top-heavy system of leadership in the state of Georgia was declared by the then State Superintendent of Schools, Marvin M. Parks (Joiner, 1979). A huge concern arose that has since plagued the education system in Georgia: system salaries and promotions and other organizations were pulling leaders away from the elementary fields. At the same time, Joiner reported, fewer numbers of students were reaching higher grade levels and colleges. In fact, only one percent were actually going into college, and hundreds of thousands were dropping out of school altogether. This was the impetus for the reform movement (Joiner).

School Reform and No Child Left Behind

Examining the school reform movement in this country involves considering the full development of public education and its place in American life through the years (Alexander & Alexander, 2001). School reform has included many “mile markers” throughout the 20th Century, one of which has had a huge impact on American public education. Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka in 1954 allowed improved educational opportunities for children through the Supreme Court’s decision that segregation in public education according to race or color is unconstitutional. Unfortunately, “freedom of choice” did not promote desegregation, and fifteen years passed before the Supreme Court, through Brown II in 1969, acted to mandate that all schools become unitary (Alexander & Alexander).
Following the enactment of desegregation came the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) of 1975 which incorporated the rights of disabled children to public school education (Alexander & Alexander, 2001). In 1990, amendments to the EAHCA were renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These changes to American public education have had profound implications to school reform and the success of all children (Alexander & Alexander).

Though not a case before the Supreme Court, *A Nation at Risk* questioned the quality of American public education. The 1983 National Commission on Excellence in Education’s (NCEE) report made it clear to the American public that the United States was falling behind in the world economic race. The nation’s once unchallenged supremacy in commerce, industry, science, and technology was being overtaken by competitors throughout the world which triggered a wave of top-down state requirements of increased coursetaking and graduation requirements and the restructuring of public schools (NCEE).

Schools must change with the population in order to be successful in the economy and society. It has become evident that mastery of high-level skills and knowledge is imperative in order to keep up with society (Wiener & Hall, 2004). Traditionally, schools have tended to neglect the responsibilities that address all students from all backgrounds. Wiener and Hall considered the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act to be the guiding force needed for this culture transformation. By requiring that states set achievement goals for all students and put systems in place toward meeting those goals, NCLB
challenges conventional values and practices to do what is necessary to guarantee that all students achieve at high levels (Wiener & Hall).

At the heart of NCLB’s accountability system is Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) (Wiener & Hall, 2004). Because all schools in all states meet test score goals according to their state’s testing systems, AYP has come to mean different things to different states (Buchanan, 2004). Although there are differences in state assessments, Wiener and Hall stated that the basic measure of student achievement under AYP is student performance in the areas of reading and math. A state meeting AYP means its student performance meets the state’s set goals in those two areas (Wiener & Hall).

Meeting set goals is only one of the many indicators that a school has made adequate yearly progress (Wiener & Hall, 2004). The formula for establishing and determining AYP involves finding the 20% of students in the state who attend the lowest-performing schools. This formula considers test participation rates, high school graduation rates, and an additional ‘indicator’ chosen by the state to measure achievement in elementary and middle schools (Wiener & Hall). To accurately measure the performance rate of a student population, 95% of all students are required to take the test. Wiener and Hall explained that safeguards which are included in the AYP formula ensure that AYP qualifiers are valid and fair, yet many educators feel that the set 95% attendance requirement is extreme. (Robelen, 2004).

Adequate yearly progress (AYP) in Georgia includes determinations for schools who are shown to be in need of improvement at different stages (GADOEb). When a school does not meet AYP for four consecutive years in the same subject (Needs Improvement Year 3), the school is identified for corrective action which may include
replacing some school staff or restructuring the internal organization of the school. When a school is in Needs Improvement Year 4, the school must replace all or most of the staff and develop a restructuring plan. Improvement Year 5 requires that all staff be replaced and the restructuring plan fully implemented.

Georgia High School Assessment for Accountability

Since NCLB’s implementation, not only have AYP qualifiers been examined for fairness and validity, high-stakes tests required of students in Georgia have also been examined. Federal law requires that each state implement an extensive student testing program which is aligned with state curriculum. The tests that have measured student achievement in the areas of Mathematics and Reading/Language Arts are the Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) for students in grades one through eight and the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) for eleventh grade students (GADOE, n.d.a).

Georgia state law requires that schools administer a curriculum-based assessment to all eleventh grade students for the purpose of identifying students who may need additional instruction in a content area that is essential to earning a high school diploma (GADOE, 2004.). The four content areas included on the GHSGT are English/Language Arts (ELA), Math, Science, and Social Studies (GADOE).

In order for a student to succeed, he/she must obtain a minimum passing score. For the GHSGT the minimum score is 500. However, in the English/Language Arts and Math content areas, different performance levels further define proficiency in those content areas. For example, for a Pass Plus, a student must score 538 on the ELA section and a 535 on the Math section. The Advanced level requires a score of 528 in ELA and a
With Georgia’s present state of affairs, the scores on required state tests in order to make AYP are a concern for educators in the state (GADOE, 2004, June 3). The Georgia Department of Education reported that there has been improvement on Georgia’s Criterion Referenced Competency Test (CRCT) scores. Especially improved in 2004 were the third grade students whose scores increased by 6% from 2002 and resulted in 91% passing the reading portion of the CRCT on the first attempt. The state's largest CRCT gains were experienced in fifth grade social studies and third grade mathematics. Both areas jumped eight percentage points. However, results on the 2004 test indicate the need for continued improvement in some areas (GADOE) with the largest loss occurring in seventh grade science, which dropped by five percentage points.

Although 2004 CRCT scores have seen an increase from previous years, disappointing results on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) are cause for alarm as stagnant results are indicative of a problem which usually call for dramatic change (GADOE, 2004, May 13). Though quality teaching has been emphasized and measures implemented with NCLB, with only a one point increase or decrease on the GHSGT from the previous year, the GADOE has formed a partnership with the Georgia’s Leadership Institute for School Improvement (GLISI) that is devoted to helping educational leaders in Georgia meet elevated expectations for student achievement and school performance (Georgia’s Leadership Institute for School Improvement, n.d.).
Principal Evaluations

With principal quality being a critical factor in the implementation of state and federal mandates and with the accountability issues associated with NCLB, there has been an amazingly insignificant amount of interest in the actual evaluation process of principals (Lashway, 2003). Considering that a principal’s work day is filled with a myriad of activities, decisions, and situation variables, assessing principal quality has been as ambiguous and inconsistent as the role of the principalship itself (Davis & Hensley, 1999). Reeves (2004) explained that the definition of leadership is ambiguous which causes unclear standards and performance levels. Consequently, the process of principal evaluations is inconsistent (Davis & Hensley).

Their study to determine how politics is related to principal evaluations, Davis and Hensley (1999) found that the majority of principal evaluations completed throughout northern California involved a two-step process: establishing performance goals in the fall, and summarizing their performance on each goal in the spring. Reeves (2004), on the other hand, found that 82% of the principals interviewed in his study of the evaluation of principals, found leadership evaluations to be ambiguous, inconsistent, and counterproductive. Fewer than half of the principals interviewed felt their evaluations had anything to do with student achievement, only 54% found their evaluations to be based on clear standards, and only 47% felt that their evaluations were sufficiently specific to help them improve their performance (Reeves).

Consistent with Reeves’ (2004) findings, the results in Davis and Hensley’s (1999) study showed that thirteen of the 14 principals interviewed viewed their formal evaluation process as perfunctory, shallow, inconsistent, and a waste of time. Seven
principals were not sure what sources of information were used in their evaluations, but most principals believed that faculty, parent, and board member perceptions about their performance counted more than quantifiable indicators of student/school success (Davis & Hensley). In large districts, principals were generally evaluated by an assistant superintendent, but in smaller districts it was generally handled by the superintendent. The majority of principals received verbal feedback as well as narrative feedback, but feedback generally occurred only if requested or if a problem arose. Only two principals reported that they got quantitative feedback. Seven principals were not sure what sources of information were used in their evaluations.

New administrators were found to have received more helpful and constructive coaching than more experienced administrators in Reeves’ study (Reeves, 2004). According to many respondents in the study, the worst evaluation experience was no evaluation. More than 18% of the principals interviewed had never received an evaluation in their current positions.

Principal Experience

Expectations for student and school success have increased since the enactment of NCLB as the struggle continues in addressing low academic achievement (Papa, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2002). These expectations have been integral in the leadership initiatives that are prevalent in education today. Because the principal is viewed as the building curricular expert in addition to the individual in charge of leading and managing the school process, performance has been attributed to the school leader as well (Papa et al.).
Papa et al.’s (2002) study of the attributes and career paths of principals showed that principal mobility rates in New York were high. After six years on the job as a first time principal, only 34% of the principals were still in the same schools. More elementary principals tended to remain in the same school rather than did those in middle or high schools. The principals who moved out of district tended to be employed by schools that had higher test scores, more teachers with better qualifications, and lower rates of students receiving free or reduced-price lunches than the schools they were serving (Papa et al.). According to Papa et al, this mobility may represent principal discontentment with working conditions or that principals are older when they assume their positions.

Principal mobility has many implications for schools and school districts, according to Papa et al. (2002). Low-performing schools tend to have principals who have less experience. Since about two-thirds of new principals leave their first principalship within six years, the culture that is necessary for high student performance is difficult to develop. Therefore, when principals move before that time period, student performance remains low. It seems, then, to Papa et al., that the least qualified principals end up at schools with the lowest student performance.

Afolabi, Nweke, and Stephens (2003) discovered in their study of Georgia school principals that principal attrition in Georgia is much higher at 15.2% than teacher attrition at 8.8% in the year 2001. Considering that the ages of principals who left the profession in 2001 ranged anywhere from 32 to 72 years, and their experience ranged from one to 49 years, Afolabi et al. suggested that some principals began the principalship with very little experience. Furthermore, the young age of some of these principals indicate that
they are leaving the profession due to reasons other than retirement. However, Afolabi’s et al. study did not specify these reasons.

It is imperative that school systems examine the quality of their principalship in order to implement the NCLB legislation and that they promote or hire experienced principals from the ranks of Assistant Principal (Papa et al., 2002). In light of the findings from the Papa et al. study that principal experience within the same school may have effects on student achievement, retaining quality principals is necessary.

Principals in High Poverty Schools

Principal experience is only one of many considerations in providing a high quality education that promotes success for all students. The influence teachers and educational leaders exercise over curriculum and instructional quality is a factor in high performing schools (Bell, 2001). Conversely, one major facet that has been attributed to some failing schools is the high poverty rate in these schools (Bell). Characteristics inherent in the students’ home backgrounds in high poverty schools have been blamed for academic weaknesses (Bell).

Bell’s (2001) study of high performing, high poverty schools with populations of students (50% or greater) on free or reduced-price lunch showed that the leadership – shared, moral leadership at both the district and school levels – seemed to make the difference in these schools. Strategies that were intended to create self-directed and reflective learners were deliberately and purposefully introduced into students’ daily routines with the leaders setting the tone for shared goals of high standards and high expectations (Bell).
In spite of the evidence in studies such as Bell’s (2001), inadequate attention has been paid to the organizational structure of effective schools serving low-income students and the change process to become more effective (Brock & Groth, 2003). Organizing effective change manifests itself in a framework of programs and practices that impacts student achievement and alters school culture (Brock & Groth). A study by Brock and Groth on highly impacted schools (HIS) showed that effective change occurred in these schools over a four year process and had six characteristics:

1. Ongoing professional development.
2. A high degree of staff involvement.
3. A strong vision of the school based on improving student learning.
4. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of both program and student achievement.
5. Reallocation of resources to support the school-wide plan.
6. Strong leadership of the principal.

A study completed by McGee (2004) of high-poverty high-performing schools in Illinois shows that only 32% of low income students met or exceeded performance on the Prairie State Achievement Examination compared to 63% of students who were not low income in grade eleven. Scores on the 2001 American College Test (ACT) show this gap, as well, with the average score for low income students being 15.3% compared to 19.5% for students who were not low income.

Despite these statistics, low income students can be very successful, but this gap in achievement that begins in the elementary grades does not decrease without interventions (McGee, 2004). McGee’s study showed that five characteristics and
practices were evident in high-poverty high-performing schools. The first of these characteristics included strong, visible leadership advocating high learning standards and high expectations, and a culture of success for all. The principal played a vital role in the success of these schools being a presence in the school and in the local community that ensures and celebrates student success (McGee).

A second characteristic, McGee (2004) determined, was the emphasis on early literacy in which large blocks of time are allotted for reading instruction. Talented, hard-working teachers who believe that all children can learn and be successful are evident in high-poverty high-performing schools. This third characteristic requires that teachers and staff put in long hours preparing and that they work in teams to improve instruction. Teachers also meet across grade levels to collaborate and strive to meet the school’s mission (McGee).

Fourth, more academic learning time is scheduled so that students receive large blocks of uninterrupted reading instruction (McGee, 2004). Instruction occurs before and after school, as well. Finally, McGee suggested that extensive parental involvement is encouraged, making parents feel welcome and safe just as it is for students. The staff makes efforts to communicate regularly and positively with parents and offers literacy and educational opportunities in parenting. McGee (2004) summarizes that it is not just one component, but all of these combined, along with professional development that coincides with the school improvement plan, that make a difference in high poverty schools.

Research has shown the importance of effective principal leadership in high poverty schools (Bell, 2001; Brock & Groth, 2003; McGee, 2004), but contrary to this
research, results from Owings’ et al. (2005) study on principal quality suggested that many low-performing, high-poverty schools are led by principals who are considered low-quality. Owings et al. offered several explanations for this phenomenon. Principals may be perceived as being less capable, but, in reality, other factors may actually influence the perceptions of principal quality. For example, teacher turnover is high in high-poverty schools because the challenges make these schools less attractive (Owings et al.). Like Bell (2001), Owings et al. suggested that the lack of parent involvement, and, more especially, the lack of dynamic parent involvement may mean that a less dynamic principal is placed in these schools. Whatever the reason that the results of the Owings et al. study show the tendency of low-quality principals being placed in high-poverty, low-performing schools, the equity issue must be addressed and strong, effective principal leadership in high-poverty schools is essential.

Principal Competencies as Defined by the ISLLC Standards

Considering the findings in studies on high poverty, high performing schools (Bell, 2001; Brock & Groth, 2003, McGee, 2004), educational leaders may use the characteristics of successful high poverty schools as those congruent with those described in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards. No reform initiative, regardless of socioeconomic considerations, has been proven to be academically successful as has the standards movement (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). Well-timed, with this being the age of accountability (Bryant, Hessel, & Isernhagen, 2002), the standards provide a clear focus for students as well as teachers and are considered by many educators and community leaders to be the vessel for the survival of the public schools (Hessel & Holloway). As education has been reframed over the centuries and served
different purposes for society, the core body of knowledge and values of today’s educational system “lie at the heart of the new citizen” (Hessel & Holloway, p. 17). According to Hessel and Holloway, it is an obligation and function of school leaders to be able to recognize and absorb the responsibilities required of educational leaders that promote student success.

Effective principal leadership positively affects student success (Hessel & Holloway, 2003; Owings et al., 2005; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2005). Successful schools are characterized by purpose-filled, purpose-driven instructional principal leadership, and the ISLLC Standards provide a clearly focused, integrated view of the school leader’s mission to promote the success of all students (Hessel & Holloway).

Though the ISLLC Standards for School Leaders do give a clear definition of appropriate leadership practice, their intent was not to measure, assess, or analyze the manner or technique school leaders communicate or implement the standards in their practice. Their intent, rather, is to serve as a foundation for effective school leadership and to provide a common language for defining, or redefining, the role of the school leader (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). Included in the standards are the most salient knowledge, dispositions, and performances necessary for superlative school leadership (Engler, 2004), characterizing best practice as an administrator (Bryant et al., 2002). However, because the ISLLC standards are broad and deep in nature, an absolute definition of each one has generated some confusion among educational leaders as to how each standard may be implemented (Engler).
Best practice of a school administrator is having a working knowledge of the ISLLC standards, performing tasks which reflect this knowledge on a daily basis (Barnett, 2003). In an effort to determine the kinds of school practices taking place in today’s schools, Barnett created a survey based on the ISLLC standards which were “generic practices for each standard” (Barnett, p. 122). The survey recorded the frequency of the completion of each task. Overall, most respondents in the survey population saw themselves as very involved in activities related to the ISLLC standards with practices relating to standards two and four most frequently practiced (Barnett).

Engler (2004) suggested that “no ISLLC standard is an island unto itself” (p. 133), and that each standard carries underlying themes that are intertwined throughout all the standards. Hessel and Holloway (2003) described four underlying themes including vision, teaching and learning, an involvement of all stakeholders, and ethical behavior. However, the discussion of the standards themselves provides a common language for defining the role of the principal (Hessel & Holloway) and include six areas of leadership.

*Vision of Learning*

Continuous school improvement, according to Hessel and Holloway (2003), is achieved when effective school leaders continuously develop, implement, monitor, evaluate, and revise the school’s vision, mission, and strategic plans. This recursive process involves the leaders’ thorough understanding of the change process and includes a systematic examination of assumptions, beliefs, and practices (Hessel & Holloway). Visionary leadership describes the educational leader who effectively carries out this
process of change (Davis, 1998) while not losing sight of the school improvement plan
(Brock & Groth, 2003).

True educational leaders envision productive new ways of achieving organizational goals and instituting obligatory changes (Dunklee, 2000). Deal and Peterson (1999) concluded that through careful probing of a school’s past and present, a clear sense of what the school can become may become a reality with educational leaders who continually identify and communicate the expectations and aspirations of their school communities. Refocusing and refining the school’s purpose and mission establishes a shared vision that involves the staff as well as the community (Deal & Peterson). The involvement of all stakeholders in this way allows independent ideas to become a collective vision (Deal & Peterson) while involving them in the decision-making process enhances collaboration and makes professional development more individualized (Phillips, 2003). Furthermore, as members of the organization conceive a vision and pursue it together, organizational effectiveness and productivity increase (DePree, 1989).

Essential to leadership is a strong sense of purpose and direction (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Setting this direction, however, requires identifying new opportunities for the school and developing and articulating a vision that can inspire others, encouraging a commitment on the part of organizational members (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood & Riehl). Successful reform occurs, Strahan (2003) added, when an agenda which addresses specific needs of students is at the core of the vision and mission of the school organization.
Schools that have raised student achievement have more than mission statements; they have an awareness and appreciation of their missions and maintain environments that cultivate among their school communities the concepts and skills which are necessary to further their learning and ensure proficient citizenship as well as life-long learning (Johnson & Uline, 2005). One theme that appears throughout the standards is the intangible idea of school culture (Engler, 2004). Culture and climate function in this process to regulate the changes which must occur to ensure that all stakeholders are involved in society’s changing expectations of teachers, programs, and curriculum which promote a vision for student success (Hessel & Holloway, 2003; Huffman & Jacobson, 2003).

**Student Learning and Staff Professional Growth**

No greater responsibility is placed on a school leader than maximizing success for all students through the centrality of teaching and learning (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). The relation between principal and school effectiveness will be better understood through the use of models that account for effects of the school context on a principal’s leadership (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996). Hessel and Holloway emphasized that, in envisioning student success, an effective school leader’s mission is a focus on teaching and learning and a commitment to a culture of high standards and expectations for all. These high expectations only occur when leaders foster a sense of “collective relentlessness… about educating all students to high levels of achievement” (Johnson & Uline, 2005, p. 46). When school leaders have the attitude that all students can learn, the likelihood that barriers to student learning will be identified and addressed is increased (Hessel & Holloway). Furthermore, it is more probable that all appropriate stakeholders
will be involved in the decision-making process which promotes quality education and assures safe, efficient, and effective learning environments (Hessel & Holloway).

Student learning is central to the function of a school, and, as a result, effective school leaders must be knowledgeable about human growth and development, as well as motivational theories (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). This instructional leadership is one defining characteristic of successful schools (Johnson & Uline, 2005; Waters et al., 2003) and is considered to be the foundation of appropriate curriculum design and use of teaching strategies for diverse populations of students in successful schools (Hessel & Holloway). Feedback based on professional teacher evaluations along with suggested improvement strategies that reflect teachers’ work, allow insights with one another and enforce high standards of performance activities (Down, Chadbourne, & Hogan, 2000).

Student learning, being the central focus of curriculum and teaching, must be about preparing students for the job market. Economic figures in the United States show a continuing decline in earnings opportunities for people who lack skills in expert thinking and complex communication – 2.2 million blue-collar jobs and 900,000 administrative support jobs (Autor, Levy, & Murnane, 2002). Yet, there has been an increase of 1.9 million in technical, managerial, and professional jobs and a 2 million increase in the number of jobs in food services. Advances in computerization have played a key role in job distribution and security (Autor et al.). It behooves educational leaders, therefore, to ensure that all subjects are being taught, including technology, so that students gain expert and complex thinking skills (Barnett, 2004; Levy & Murnane, 2004).

Knowledge of necessary, pertinent curriculum and the professional development that is essential for its implementation is important in building and maintaining
supportive learning environments (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). Job embedded, sustained professional development requires that leaders nurture and sustain an atmosphere of trust so that teachers may have the courage to step beyond their comfort zone and explore teaching approaches that will more effectively generate high levels of achievement (Johnson & Uline, 2005).

Successful schools are those whose leaders ensure that professional development results in actual changes in instruction (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Johnson & Uline). Principals must be aware of teachers’ needs, feelings, perceptions and attitudes, involve teachers in decision-making, and be involved in reflective teaching and leadership to benefit the total school community (Campo, 1993).

Developing professional learning that impacts student achievement is a challenge that can be unrealistic unless a combined effort is made by the leader to involve the school community (Timperley, 2005). Timperley suggested that instructional leadership cannot be accomplished alone or without the necessary expertise in improving the capacity of individuals within the school community to promote the context of school improvement. Effective school leaders set up circumstances that allow teachers to learn from student achievement data. Timperley’s study proved that when teachers were equipped with the knowledge of student test data, teaching practices made a difference in student achievement. School improvement is accomplished through the help of all members of the school organization, emancipating the intricacies of designing and fostering a supportive learning environment (Timperley).
Organizational Management and Operations: Safe, Effective, and Efficient Learning Environment

In order to promote a learning environment that focuses on school improvement requires that the school leader manages the daily operations and fiscal resources responsibly, efficiently, and effectively (Barnett, 2004; Retallick & Fink, 2002). The delicate art of management must take form in the areas of communications, human resources, decision-making, and budgeting (Dunklee, 2000).

With communication being “the lifeblood of the school” (Green, 2001, p. 125), effective educational leaders establish strong lines of communication with teachers and students (Waters et al., 2003). In Waters’ et al. meta-analysis of 30 years of research of leadership practices on student achievement, communication was found to be one of 21 leadership responsibilities with a statistically significant effect on student achievement. Although the flow of communication occurs in many patterns within school organizations, it is important for school leaders to have a communication plan or strategy in place that clearly conveys the significance and importance of attaining the vision and goals of the school community (Green, 2001).

Successful communication within the school community may be accomplished through the creation of learning communities which provide individuals with a shared vision and collaborative working conditions (Green, 2001). Through learning communities, the school’s vision may be accomplished with effective communication that allows collaboration and mutual respect for all involved in the school community. The best educational leaders communicate with their faculties in a manner which fosters
a feeling of inclusion and ownership among the members of the school community (Connors, 2000).

With student achievement being the target of the school organization, involving stakeholders in the communication process is invaluable as effective educational leaders draw resources from all areas of the school community (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). Skills in communication for this resource are essential as the school leader models the school organization’s core beliefs, and then disseminates them to the public (Hessel & Holloway).

Another important aspect of educational leadership is the area of human resources. In successful human resource planning, Lunenburg and Ornstein (2000) considered such elements as identifying staffing needs, forecasting available personnel, and determining what personnel additions and/or replacements are necessary to maintain a staff which can fulfill the mission and vision of the school.

Sustaining a community of workers whose aim is to fulfill the school’s mission and vision requires that the leader, as manager, understand and respond to the needs their employees bring to work (Bolman & Deal, 1991). Efforts to provide ongoing professional development to help teachers master new curricula and teaching strategies presented by the state and district are those that address the needs of, not only employees, but of the students as well. Furthermore, decision-making based on data analysis is an area of school management that positively influences student achievement (Schwartz, 2001).

Decision-making has a significant influence on the performance of the faculty, staff, and students, and, ultimately, the effectiveness of the leader (Green, 2001). Consequently, educational leaders must be effective decision makers and communicate
those decisions to the school and community in order to promote student achievement (Green). Wade contended that stakeholders expect schools to justify the effectiveness of the programs they use in their schools, and school boards, in turn, ask to see data that administrators use to guide decision-making in schools (2001). This accountability has caused educators to realize that decision-making should be based on carefully collected data on effective strategies to improve teaching and learning (Wade).

The most useful types of data to drive the process of school improvement and link teaching practices and student performance are statistical data providing evidence of the success or failure of educational programs. Statistical data shows strengths and weaknesses in students’ knowledge and provides guidance on which teaching practices should be continued, altered, or discontinued (Wade). Similarly, by using student assessment data, student demographic data, perceptions data, and school program data, the success or failure of educational programs in schools and districts may be measured to determine their fate (Wade).

Although data collecting is a useful tool in determining the success or failure of teaching strategies and educational programs, it is also very useful for educational leaders in estimating the funds needed to fulfill a school’s vision. Principals reported increased responsibilities related to political involvement regarding financial concerns and fiscal decision-making (Doud & Keller, 1998). Oswald (1995) claimed that wise use of school budgeting to enhance student achievement is important when operating on a limited budget. The Committee on Economic Development (CED, 1994) concluded that in order to promote achievement, school districts must ensure that schools use funds efficiently and that sufficient funds get to the classroom to improve learning. One way that may
eliminate unnecessary expenditures is through school-based, or site-based, management, giving principals authority and accountability, and allowing schools to use innovative teaching methods (CED).

Data analysis is not a cure-all for all the problems in a school, nor is it the answer to education reform. It is, however, a tool that educational leaders may use to set common goals for improving student achievement, thereby increasing confidence among the staff, students, parents, and community regarding the effectiveness of public education (Wade, 2001).

**Collaboration: Families and Communities**

Effectiveness of public education depends largely on the effectiveness on the school leader. Day, Harris, and Hadfield’s (2001) study examining existing theories of effective leadership found that effective leaders were effective because they clearly communicated visions and values shared by all stakeholders and developed climates of collaboration with a consistent focus on the betterment of students. Though a supportive learning environment is the foundation of schools which promote and produce successful students, producing a supportive learning environment requires that the school leader base all processes and activities on the principles of governance of successful schools (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). Leaders who succeed are insistent in their pursuit of positive relationships within and outside the organization (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). This aggressiveness is also present in their mission to form and foster common goals and values within the organization while obtaining necessary resources and support from outside (Leithwood, Jantzi, Earl, Watson, Levin, & Fullan, 2004; Leithwood & Riehl).
Hessel and Holloway (2003) considered that by involving all stakeholders in school management, the school leader ensures that responsibilities to maximize ownership and accountability are shared and serve to guide the leader’s actions in problem solving, conflict resolution, and negotiation. Leaders must create environments which welcome, value, and respect parents and community members (Johnson & Uline, 2005). Case studies show that expanded participation by the local community is fundamental in the acceptance and success of change in the school by crystallizing shared concerns and stimulating people into action (Sebring & Bryk, 2000). Outreach to families and the community, however, requires collaboration among school community members, respecting work schedules and business times in order to maximize their involvement. This, in turn, also serves as an outreach to business, religious, political, and service agencies and organizations (Hessel & Holloway; Johnson & Uline).

Involving stakeholders and other members of the school community in the development of a vision, school improvement efforts, and in the management processes of the school, shows confidence in individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). This inclusion is dependent on a communication system that is comprehensive and demonstrates the need to engage in ongoing dialogue with decision-makers and representatives of diverse community groups (Hessel & Holloway).

Communication involves skills on the part of the school leader in crafting messages that empower rather than overwhelm the faculty. Empowering members of the school community creates a coherent focus that improves the quality of policy decisions (Johnson & Uline, 2005). The coherent focus and, ultimately, the realization of the
vision, is celebrated and recognized through the acknowledgement that schools cannot do everything. Rather, it is the school community and its stakeholders and their contributions that bring student success (Hessel & Holloway, 2003; Johnson & Uline). Brock and Groth’s (2003) study of effective schools showed that school communities that had the attitude that students can succeed through academic improvement had the greatest impact on school improvement. By including members of the school community and stakeholders in the decision-making process of the school, an effective school leader demonstrates not only the need for recognizing diversity, but respect for the existence of different ethnic, religious, and political groups within the community (Hessel & Holloway, 2003).

**Integrity, Fairness, and Ethics in Learning**

The existence of diverse cultures within a school organization requires leadership practice that combines management expertise with values and ethics (Sergiovanni, 2005). Effective school leaders are deeply intertwined with ethical issues through the obligatory and conventional school process (Murphy, Yff, & Shipman, 2000). The metaphor of educational leadership as moral leadership is central to the goal of equal educational opportunity (Murphy et al.).

Murphy et al. contended that moral leadership suggested changing schooling from the historical molding of students to fit current, possibly dysfunctional, organizational forms to be responsive to all students in need of an education. “As the main institution for fostering social cohesion in an increasingly diverse society, publicly funded schools must serve all children” (Fullan, 2003, p. 3) addressing their cognitive and social needs. Moral questions are not raised when school leaders are being sensitive to the glossary of terms
which define the culture of schools and diverse members in school communities such as “loose connectedness of school parts,” “the competing preferences and interests of the school community,” “the need for people to construct their own reality,” and “the importance of norms and values” (Sergiovanni, 2005, p. 18). Leaders, instead, have been questioned when they ignore these realities of school culture (Sergiovanni). When a school leader sustains the conditions in a school that demonstrate sensitivity to diversity in the school community, Hessel and Holloway considered that an effective leader models a commitment to students as individuals and proves a trust in people and their judgments.

Skillful leaders possess a competence in human relationships and are careful that their interactions are fair and have a strong sense of integrity with an unyielding focus on the best interest of all students (Johnson & Uline, 2005). Furthermore, they defend the rights of all members of the school community (Hessel & Holloway, 2003).

Although leaders in successful schools make a conscious effort to seek out and recognize diversity among their school communities, Johnson and Uline (2005) indicated that such pursuits drain energy that could otherwise be spent serving student needs. Therefore, successful leaders promote the needs of students to a level above their own personal concerns and encourage their teachers and other adult members of their school communities to do the same (Johnson & Uline).

*Politics, Socialization, Economics, Legalities, and Cultures*

Moral leadership includes using a theory of leadership that complements people in the organization as a basis for school improvement (Sergiovanni, 2005). According to Hessel and Holloway (2003), the political activities of decision-makers outside the
school, the socioeconomic composition of the district and state, the legalities that govern the operations of the school, and the cultural composition and diversity of the region all inflict pressure on school leaders to provide a quality education for all students. Some of the events and promotions introduced or mandated promote learning, but others present a barrier to student learning within the school (Hessel & Holloway). Effective school leaders question the fit of school improvement projects and initiatives to the school and the school community (Sergiovanni) and determine the organizational conditions and policy strategies that incite reluctance to accept the change needed for improvement (Hargreaves, 2002).

Bringing about change to implement mandated programs means that effective school leaders must examine the objectives of the mandates that the political force is placing on the school, and then be sensitive to the needs of the school community in implementing the initiative (Huffman & Jacobson, 2003; Retallick & Fink, 2002). Retallick and Fink’s study of four secondary school principals undergoing a project initiated by their Local Education Association (LEA) to determine their schools’ capacity to build and sustain initiatives dealing with the changing educational environments in Ontario concluded that the principals who are knowledgeable of their schools’ cultures are able to carry through strategies that had grounding in the philosophy of the initiative. Educational leaders who are effective in the change process are able to combine the leadership skills necessary to mobilize staff into action with effective organizational and managerial strategies (Retallick & Fink).

Communicating the vision of the school to outside forces that have an impact on the education of students involves establishing and maintaining ongoing dialogue with
these groups or individuals, making them aware of the efforts of teachers and students and how they can best support education and school improvement proposals (Hessel & Holloway, 2003; Johnson, 1998). Educational leaders are public servants, accountable for the public trust given them (Hart, 1999). As effective educational leaders progress, they must define what is good in education in terms of what is just with a deep commitment to improving the lives of children (Hart).

Leadership skills, behaviors, and practices are of utmost importance in producing and maintaining successful schools and are strongly associated with the human-resources and political frames in order to understand the impact of local, state, and federal decisions have on schools (Gaziel, 2003). However, student achievement is the most important thing in schools and should be the focus of all school improvement initiatives, staff development, and the focus of every school leader (Barkley, Bottoms, Feagin, & Clark, 2001).

Summary

Myriad classification systems define the constituencies of leadership, many of which are still used by organizational leaders today. However, effective organizational leaders are those who bring importance and value to the organization by getting followers to forswear their own self-interest and focus on needs of the team or organization and by helping subordinates reach self-actualization. This type of leadership – transformational leadership – involves an actual transformation in the attitudes and behaviors of organizational members to the point that some are even converted into leaders themselves.
A most contemporary leadership style, with little to no empirical evidence, is Level 5 leadership. With Level 5 leadership, leaders move beyond transformational leadership to empowering and creating within an organization a constancy exemplar of leaders of leaders. Two models of effective principal leadership, the instructional and transformational models are leadership models used with leaders in high-performing schools.

A clear definition of principal leadership is essential in order to study the effects of principal leadership. Three characteristics are consistent with effective school leaders. These characteristics include setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization. Effective principalship includes many of the same characteristics, but have characteristics which distinguish effectiveness at the different academic levels, as well.

Georgia principals are no different, but, perhaps, have a greater challenge than do principals in states who have higher levels of student achievement. From an historical to a contemporary perspective, education in the state of Georgia has had some hardships. From post Civil War until the present, Georgia has seen harsh social situations; but, in order for Georgia to progress and bring its schools to distinction and its students to success, Georgia must provide quality leaders to lead its schools to meet the accountability issues presented them.

The ISLLC standards offer one consistent set of common standards and provide a clearly focused, integrated view of the school leader’s mission to promote the success of all students. The standards provide a common language for defining, or redefining, the role of the school leader including the most salient knowledge, dispositions, and performances necessary for superlative school leadership. The areas of leadership that are
addressed are school vision, teaching and learning, managing the learning environment, including the broader community in the learning process, ethics, and the political aspects of school leadership.
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<th>STUDY</th>
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| Campo (1993)    | Determine a better understanding of the role of the principal in fostering collaboration among teachers and to begin to answer some to the questions relating to principals’ strategies and the influence of teachers’ motivation and commitment on the effect of these strategies. | Data from two comprehensive studies of school improvement in Ontario and British Columbia | Quantitative and Qualitative | • Collaborative school cultures contribute to the success of school improvement processes and learning communities  
• Collaborative cultures are associated with transformational leadership.  
• The transformational principal has flexibility and vision.  
• Emphasizes personal and individual growth and facilitating interaction between teachers to benefit total school community, principals must be aware of teachers’ needs, feelings, perceptions and attitudes, involve teachers in decision-making, and be involved in reflective teaching and leadership. |
| Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis. (1996) | To explore the nature and extent of the school principal’s effects on reading achievement | 87 U.S. elementary schools in Tennessee that participated in the state’s School Incentives Improvement Program (SIIP) | Quantitative – questionnaires | • Principals play an important role in school effectiveness.  
• The relation between principal and school effectiveness will be better understood through the use of models that account for effects of the school context on a principal’s leadership. |
Table 2.1 continued

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| Hallinger & Heck (1996) | To review the empirical literature on the relationship between the principal’s role and school effectiveness during the period from 1980 to 1995 | Qualitative and quantitative studies conducted on the effectiveness of principals in schools | Qualitative – analysis of quantitative research according to their underlying theoretical models | - The effects of principal leadership on student learning should be examined in terms of theoretically relevant intervening variables as well as school outcomes.  
- Studying the effectiveness of direct-effects on the effects of school principals is not theoretical – indirect effects are substantial to school effectiveness.  
- Theoretically informed models of leadership influence school performance.  
- Leadership is both an independent and a dependent variable in school success.  
- Researchers should focus on uncovering the relationship between principal leadership and the variables that are believed to influence student achievement.  
- School goals is the one factor that was consistent with school leadership effectiveness  
- Achieving results through others is the essence of leadership.  
- Most principals had difficulty letting go of the power and control.  
- Instructional leadership requires sufficient |
<p>| Johnson (1998)    | To determine the perceptions and reactions of principals as they         | Six elementary school principals from three different subregions in an | Qualitative – interview                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                   |</p>
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<tr>
<td>Collins (2001)</td>
<td>are involved in the restructuring of a school district from bureaucratic to decentralization</td>
<td>University of companies appearing on the Fortune 500 from 1965 to 1995</td>
<td>Quantitative – Data Analysis</td>
<td>training, and, without this, the assumption that sound educational directions for schools will occur is false.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To examine companies who made the move from good results to great results and maintained that status for at least 15 years and the</td>
<td>urban school district.</td>
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<td>• Communication on the part of the superintendent attempting to gain support for the reform may have made a difference in motivating principals.</td>
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<td>• Principals who pledged their support, did so based on personal, professional, or school-related rewards expectations.</td>
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<td>• A missing ingredient in the reform was a good system of communication between the superintendent and school principals.</td>
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<td>• The continuous changes made by the central office during the reform gave the impression that the concept of decentralization was more rhetoric than reality.</td>
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<td>• Leaders who catalyze commitment to a standard instead of building enduring greatness in an organization limit the organization’s effectiveness.</td>
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<td>• Great leaders were found to be ambitious, but not egocentric.</td>
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<td>• Great leaders produced sustained results</td>
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Studies Related to Principal Leadership

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<tr>
<td>Pashiardis (2003)</td>
<td>leadership behind those companies</td>
<td>Forty-nine principals between the ages 50-59 in the Cyprus educational system</td>
<td>Qualitative – interview</td>
<td>despite the change process.</td>
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<td>To present the characteristics and qualities (both personal and professional) of an effective principal</td>
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<td>- Great leaders attribute the success of the organization to factors other than themselves.</td>
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<td>- Principals have great love and ambition for their profession.</td>
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<td>- Principals are deep thinkers and constant learners.</td>
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<td>- Principals can influence more from a leadership position than any other in the profession.</td>
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<td>- Principals are risk-takers.</td>
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<td>- Principals are self-confident, honest, and truth lovers.</td>
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<td>- Principals find innovative ways to reward teachers.</td>
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<td>Principals work hard to create and maintain good school-parent relationships.</td>
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<td>Principals believe in the trait-leadership theory: If you don’t have it, you won’t get it.</td>
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<td>- One characteristic that these principals had in common was the exaggerated human and emotional characteristics that they exhibited.</td>
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### Table 2.2

Studies Related to Principals at the Different Academic Levels

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<tr>
<td>Doud &amp; Keller</td>
<td>To examine efforts to involve parents and teachers in</td>
<td>1,323 principals in K-4, K-6, and K-8</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
<td>• Principals reported increasing influence on school district decisions affecting their schools, but decreasing authority to make decisions.</td>
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<td>(1998)</td>
<td>school-based decision-making</td>
<td>schools</td>
<td>survey</td>
<td>• Priorities of principals from highest importance to lowest were supervision and contact, student/management and interaction with students, planning and conducting staff development, budget administration, and interaction with central office.</td>
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<td>• Principals reported increased responsibilities related to marketing in their schools, political involvement regarding financial concerns, involvement with social services for children in need, working with site-based councils, and fiscal decision-making.</td>
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<td>• About 90% of principals reported good relations with stakeholders and much more influence on school-district decisions which directly affect them.</td>
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<td>• The most commonly shared prior experience for K-8 principals is a mean of ten years as an elementary teacher. Understanding and applying technology was the K-8 principal’s greatest need.</td>
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Studies Related to Principals at the Different Academic Levels

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<tr>
<td>Sebring &amp; Bryk</td>
<td>To determine key elements in principals of productive schools in Chicago</td>
<td>Elementary schools in Chicago</td>
<td>Quantitative – Case Studies and Survey Analyses</td>
<td>• One underlying them in Chicago’s elementary school principals is that they skillfully used a combination of support and pressure to promote the efforts of adults who work directly with children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2000)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Four attributes of these elementary principals included a comprehensive, facilitative orientation, an institutional focus on student learning, efficient management, and a reliance on a combination of pressure and support to motivate others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jason (2001)</td>
<td>To measure the relationship between the influence elementary principals perceive they have on efforts to improve student achievement and the meaning they derive from their role as instructional leaders</td>
<td>44 elementary school principals in a large urban school system</td>
<td>Quantitative – questionnaire</td>
<td>• A relationship was shown to exist between an elementary principal’s perception of their meaning of their instructional role and shaping the school’s culture, providing an environment conducive to learning, enhancing professional development of staff, developing and implementing instructional programs, and obtaining parental involvement and support.</td>
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<td>• Principals with six or more years of experience perceive that their influence is greatest in promoting a climate conducive to teaching and learning and developing and implementing instructional programs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 2.2 continued

Studies Related to Principals at the Different Academic Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
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<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</table>
| Williams (2001) | To compare teachers’ perceptions of principal effectiveness in secondary school nominated for the National Secondary School Recognition Program (NSSRP) and a randomly selected sample of schools not nominated for the NSSRP in Tennessee | 414 teachers in 20 randomly selected schools not nominated for the NSSRP and 410 teachers in 22 secondary schools nominated for the NSSRP in Tennessee | Quantitative – questionnaire | • Elementary principals perceived their influence to be low on parental involvement.  
• No significant differences were found in the areas of organizational linkage, organizational environment, teacher relations and interactive processes scores of principals in secondary schools nominated for the NSSRP and the principals of those not nominated.  
• Student relation, affective processes, and educational program scores nominated for the NSSRP were significantly higher than those from schools not nominated.  
• Principals in schools nominated for the NSSRP provide better leadership skills in organizational development, working with personnel, and in providing organizational direction through goal attainment and establishing expectations and promoting appropriate change.  
• All secondary principals nurture the climate of the school and develop positive working relationships, but do not spend enough time on curriculum development, and instructional improvement. |
Table 2.2 continued

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<th>STUDY</th>
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<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Brown & Anfara (2002) | To introduce the middle school principal as a partner in the attempt to improve schools for students | 75 middle school principals in Pennsylvania and New Jersey | Qualitative – survey and interview | • All spend time on being supportive of the political base of the organization.  
• Most of the middle level principals want to flatten the hierarchy, increase empowerment, and encourage professional autonomy.  
• Most view leadership as a shared responsibility.  
• Most recognize the need to transition from a managerial focus to an instructional focus.  
• Most listen with respect and try to understand the others’ point of view.  
• It is important to encourage new ideas and empower those to try new ideas.  
• High levels of involvement and collaboration in problem solving are needed.  
• The role of the middle level principal is shifting from traditional patterns of relationships to those that are connected to competence needed for the task and the need for collegial, cooperative work.  
• Principals felt that being a principal made a difference for students, staff, and the community.  
• In a typical week, secondary principals |
| Billot (2003) | To provide discussion on the New Zealand component of a collaborative study | 240 principals, a focus group of principals, and a number of interviews with | Quantitative and qualitative – questionnaires, focus groups, interviews | |
Table 2.2 continued

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<tr>
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</thead>
</table>
| Sagnak (2005) | undertaken in New Zealand and Queensland, Australia which focused on what principals report they actually do compared with both what they would like to do, as well as what they believe their employers expect them to do and to investigate the skills and competencies for school leadership | 30 principals and teachers in 32 primary schools in central Erzincan | Quantitative – scale forms at 15 day intervals                                      | spent the majority of their time completing management and administrative responsibilities.  
- In an ideal week, they spend a great deal of time in activities of strategic leadership, education/curriculum leadership, management/administration and little time with student issues, parent/community issues, and staffing issues.  
- Over 90% of the principals identified “inspiring and visioning change for their schools” and “strong interpersonal/people skills” as the key skills in undertaking their roles. These were supported by strong managerial and delegation skills.  
- Most principals wished to “do the right thing.”  
- Strengths that principals need to possess are being a hard worker, having a sense of humor, and being direct, but trustworthy, honest, and firm.  
- Congruence was found between personal values and the perceptions related to organizational values among the principals in relation to value dimensions of creativity, |
Table 2.2 continued

Studies Related to Principals at the Different Academic Levels

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wood (2005)</td>
<td>perceptions related to the organizational values of principals and teachers working in primary schools</td>
<td>Principals from 8 high schools, 4 middle schools, and 42 elementary schools</td>
<td>Qualitative and quantitative – surveys, focus groups, and interviews</td>
<td>adaptability, cautiousness, social equality, autonomy, courtesy, humor, logic, obedience, aggressiveness, initiative, development, diligence, formality, orderliness, consideration, experimentation, forgiveness, moral integrity, fairness, openness, and broad-mindedness. Incongruence was found between personal values and the perceptions related to organizational values among the principals in relation to value dimensions of cooperation and economy.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To explore principals’ roles in a large, urban, standards-based induction program</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Principals have five leadership roles in induction: culture builder, instructional leader, coordinator/facilitator of mentors, novice teacher recruiter, and novice teacher advocate/retainer.</td>
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<td>• Secondary school principals seem to be less active in the induction process than elementary principals.</td>
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<td>• Elementary school principals make frequent classroom visits, unlike middle and high school principals who do not make frequent classroom visits.</td>
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<td>• Elementary school principals interacted with</td>
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Table 2.2 continued

Studies Related to Principals at the Different Academic Levels

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<td>novice teachers in a wider array of roles and activities than middle and high school principals.</td>
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<td>• The majority of elementary and middle school principals provided student work focus meetings monthly whereas high principals did not provide them at all.</td>
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<td>• Elementary and middle school principals emphasize meetings on a regular basis for the teachers to examine student work.</td>
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<td>STUDY</td>
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| Davis & Hensley       | To examine the relationship between politics and the evaluation of school principals | 14 principals and six superintendents from a variety of rural, suburban and urban settings in Northern California | Qualitative – interview | • The process of principal evaluations is inconsistent.  
• The majority of principal evaluations was a two-step process: establishing performance goals in the fall, and summarizing their performance on each goal in the spring.  
• In large districts, principals were generally evaluated by an assistant superintendent, but in smaller districts it was generally handled by the superintendent.  
• The majority of principals received verbal feedback as well as narrative feedback, but feedback generally occurred only if requested or if a problem arose.  
• Only 2 principals reported that they got quantitative feedback.  
• Seven principals were not sure what sources of information were used in their evaluations.  
• Thirteen of the 14 principals interviewed viewed their formal evaluation process as perfunctory, shallow, inconsistent and a waste of time.  
• 82% of the principals interviewed found leadership evaluations to be ambiguous, inconsistent, and counterproductive. |
| Reeves (2004)         | To find a system of evaluating principals                       | A nonrandom sample of 510 district                                           | Qualitative – interview |                                                                                                                                         |
Table 2.3 continued

Studies Related to Principal Evaluation

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<th>STUDY</th>
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</table>
|       | emulate in order to produce quality principals | superintendents, central office administrators, and principals from 21 U. S. states |       | • Fewer than half of the principals interviewed felt their evaluations had anything to do with student achievement.  
• Only 54% found their evaluations to be based on clear standards.  
• Only 47% felt that their evaluations were sufficiently specific to help them improve their performance.  
• New administrators received more helpful and constructive coaching than more experienced administrators.  
• According to many respondents, the worst evaluation experience was no evaluation. More than 18% of the principals interviewed had never received an evaluation in their current positions.  
• The definition of leadership is ambiguous which causes unclear standards and performance levels. |
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<th>STUDY</th>
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<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
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<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papa, Lankford, &amp; Wyckoff (2002)</td>
<td>To examine the attributes and career paths of New York States’ principals</td>
<td>All teachers and administrators in the state of New York over the past 30 years</td>
<td>Qualitative – descriptive</td>
<td>• Principals feel that group process skills are critical to their job success.</td>
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<td>• Principals stated that they learned group process skills other than in their preparation programs.</td>
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<td>• Principals are entering their careers with minimal training which they classified as inadequate.</td>
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<td>• High school principals are more likely to take administrative positions in other districts within six years of their first principalship.</td>
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<td>• Principals who move within districts tend to move to schools similar to the ones they leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Afolabi, Nweke, &amp; Stephens (2003)</td>
<td>To investigate regional differences in the demographic professional and educational characteristics of Principals in Georgia</td>
<td>Georgia principals in 1990</td>
<td>Quantitative – data analysis</td>
<td>• There are differences in the racial composition of Georgia principals regionally.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>• Whites dominate the majority of the administrative personnel in the state, but the largest number is in the North region which is 90.6% white.</td>
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<td>• The highest percentage of multiracial and Hispanic administrators is in the North Central region with 1.2% and 0.4% respectively.</td>
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<td>• There is a need for diversification in the state.</td>
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</table>
Table 2.4 continued

Studies Related to Principal Experience

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<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
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<td>of Georgia because of the growing diverse population of students.</td>
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<td>• There are more male principals in Georgia because of the growing diverse population of students.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• There are more male principals in Georgia than female.</td>
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<td>• To improve principal quality, there must be increased access to support networks, coaching and mentoring, more autonomy, better working conditions, and compensation to reward principals for the many roles they play.</td>
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<td>• With No Child Left Behind, school systems must hire highly qualified principals.</td>
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<td>• Principal attrition in Georgia is much higher at 15.2 percent than teacher attrition at 8.8 percent in the year 2001.</td>
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<td>• Principals who left the profession in 2001 ranged anywhere from 32 to 72 years, and their experience ranged from one to 49 years.</td>
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<td>• Some principals began the principalship with very little experience</td>
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<td>• Principals are leaving the profession due to other reasons than retirement.</td>
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<td>STUDY</td>
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</table>
| Bell, J. A., (2001) | To inform and enrich the knowledge of educational leaders wishing to raise academic achievement, deepen participants’ understanding of why the schools were effective, and to contribute to the body of knowledge regarding what helps students from diverse backgrounds learn | Ten elementary schools and two high schools which met API ranking of 7 or above over two years, 50% or more students qualifying for free and reduced lunch (high school) and 60% or more at the elementary level | Qualitative – Descriptive           | • Leadership (moral leadership) at both the district and school levels seemed to make the difference in HP2 schools  
• Shared leadership was characteristic of HP2 schools.  
• Strategies that were intended to create self-directed and reflective learners were deliberately and purposefully introduced into students’ daily routines.  
• Leaders set the tone for shared goals of high standards and high expectations.                                                                 |
| McGee, G. W., (2004) | To illustrate the difference in academic performance between low-income schools – Illinois schools that have sustained a record of closing the gap in academic performance | Qualitative and quantitative analysis                                           | School size does not prove to be statistically significant in student performance.  
• The correlation between third-grade class size and third-grade ISAT reading scores is significant but small and has no causal effects when controlling low-income student background. |
Table 2.5 continued

Studies Related to Student Achievement in High-Poverty Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
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<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>DESIGN</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>income children and their peers, between minority children and their classmates, and between those schools that serve a more advantaged population</td>
<td>achievement gap</td>
<td></td>
<td>students.</td>
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<td>• Golden Spike schools spend a slight, but significantly higher percentage of their revenue on instruction.</td>
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<td>• Golden Spike schools have a significantly lower mobility rate than HP/LP schools.</td>
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<td>• Good leaders, a capable, hard working staff, literacy in early grades, more hours in school, and parent involvement are important.</td>
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### Table 2.6

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<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</table>
| Murphy, Yff, & Shipman (2000) | To provide early indications about how the ISLLC Standards are being employed to strengthen educational leadership throughout the nation | All the states and territories of the United States | Qualitative and Quantitative – observations, interviews, and surveys | • In focusing on strengthening school leadership, the ISLLC Standards initiative fits into a series of initiatives designed to improve school leadership in America.  
• The ISLLC Standards are beginning to take root in a number of the 50 states.  
• Effective school leaders are deeply intertwined with ethical issues through the obligatory and conventional school process.  
• The metaphor of educational leadership as moral leadership is central to the goal of equal educational opportunity.  
• Moral leadership suggested changing schooling from the historical molding of students to fit current, possibly dysfunctional, organizational forms to be responsive to all students in need of an education.  
• Although the respondents had high regard for the standards, they did not incorporate them at high levels.  
• Female administrators were more likely to place higher values on the standards than their male counterparts.  
• Superintendents with more experience and more recent formal educational activity were |
| Boeckmann & Dickenson (2001)   | To determine the usability of the ISLLC Standards by school personnel    | Random sample of schools from 17 states and more than 500 superintendents | Quantitative – survey                        |                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
Table 2.6 continued

Studies Related to the ISLLC Standards

<table>
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<th>STUDY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bryant, Hessel, &amp; Isernhagen</td>
<td>To examine the relationship of the ISLLC standards to various accrediting practices as well as the use of these standards for the purpose of certifying school leaders</td>
<td>School Leaders Licensure Assessment (SLLA), SAT, GRE, ACT, MCAT, LSAT, NASSP’s Assessment Center process</td>
<td>Qualitative – analysis</td>
<td>likely to place more value on the standards and incorporate them in their day-to-day performance than those with less experience or less recent educational activity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2002)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• The ISLLC standards have been created as the ideal knowledge, dispositions, and behaviors characterizing best practice as an administrator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To determine the relationship between principals’ quality as measured by ratings on an ISLLC standards rubric and student achievement scores over time</td>
<td>Two hundred Virginia public school principals, one person who worked closely with each principal, and the superintendent of each principal in the state of Virginia</td>
<td>Quantitative – rubric</td>
<td>• In this era of accountability, the idea of an adoption of this national set of standards for school leaders is well timed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owings, Kaplan, &amp; Nunnery</td>
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<td>• Principals who rated the lowest on the overall quality indicator tended to work in school that had much higher percentages of children eligible for free or reduced lunch than principals who were in schools with lower poverty levels.</td>
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<td>(2005)</td>
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<td>• The strength between principal quality correlations and student achievement at grades three and five is significant, but there was not a significant relationship between</td>
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Table 2.6 continued

Studies Related to the ISLLC Standards

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<td>principal quality and student achievement at the high school level.</td>
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<td>• An empirical relationship exists between the principal’s mastery of the ISLLC standards and a whole and high-achieving school.</td>
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<td>• It is not clear from the data results whether less capable principals are placed in high poverty schools, whether they are perceived as being less capable, or if other factors contribute to principal quality.</td>
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<td>• High teacher turnover and a high number of teachers working in low-achieving, low-poverty schools contribute to poor student achievement.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Principals in Virginia who had the longest tenure in a school also had the lowest quality ranking, the highest poverty, and the lowest achieving students.</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Principals who ranked the lowest on principal quality had significantly more years of experience in the schools than did any of the higher quality ranking principals.</td>
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<td>• Newer principals may be more familiar with standards because they more recently went through an accredited program.</td>
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Table 2.7

Studies Related to Vision of Learning

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leithwood &amp; Jantzi (1999)</td>
<td>To determine the effects of transformational leadership on student engagement and school conditions</td>
<td>1818 teachers and 6490 students from 94 elementary schools in one large district</td>
<td>Quantitative – survey</td>
<td>• Effective leaders support the purposes and requirements of curriculum and instruction, facilitate professional learning, and offer opportunities for collaboration.</td>
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<td>• Family educational culture has more effect on student engagement than transformational leadership practices.</td>
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<td>• School administrators build school vision and goals, provide intellectual stimulation, offer individualized support, symbolize professional practices and values, demonstrate high performance expectations, and allow participation in decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brock &amp; Groth (2003)</td>
<td>To determine the process by which schools become effective and to understand the factors that contribute to the ways in which schools are able to transform themselves into “effective” schools and the length of</td>
<td>Fifty-four schools in both urban and very rural locations</td>
<td>Qualitative- formal/informal observations, interviews</td>
<td>• Schools which include the entire school community in academic improvement had a more substantial impact on their school improvement efforts than those schools who shared the idea that there was little hope for student learning.</td>
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<td>• Six factors make a difference in effective schools: ongoing professional development; staff involvement; vision of the school based on improving student learning, continuous monitoring and evaluation of the SIP and student achievement; resources for the SIP;</td>
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Table 2.7 continued

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huffman, J. B., &amp; Jacobson, A. L. (2003)</td>
<td>time necessary to complete this transformation.</td>
<td>83 educators enrolled in masters level courses in educational administration in a Texas university.</td>
<td>Quantitative – questionnaire</td>
<td>• Change must be meaningful and applicable for community members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Determine and analyze core processes of professional learning communities and perceived relationships between the core processes and leadership styles of the principal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Stakeholders in Professional Learning Communities share a vision and plan action and assessment for student growth and school improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phillips, J. (2003)</td>
<td>To describe how administrators and teachers in one urban middle school shared</td>
<td>Teachers at Woodsedge Middle School in a southwestern city</td>
<td>Qualitative – data and group discussions</td>
<td>• Professional Learning Community leaders support community members and facilitate reaching shared goals of the organization.</td>
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<td>• Transformational leadership offers greater opportunities for success in developing a learning community.</td>
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<td>• Positive principles, ethics, and values characteristic of professional learning communities positively impacts schools.</td>
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<td>• As teachers engage in the decision-making process, professional development becomes increasingly individualized.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Practitioners at Woodsedge used research-</td>
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Table 2.7 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>DESIGN</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strahan (2003)</td>
<td>leadership tasks to develop an authentic learning community</td>
<td>76 administrators, teachers, parents, and support personnel at 3 K-5 schools in North Carolina</td>
<td>Qualitative and Quantitative – data; interviews</td>
<td>based literature to guide their work and connect theory to practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To explore the professional culture at low-income minority schools</td>
<td></td>
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<td>• Woodsedge transformed into an authentic learning community through shared, or distributed, leadership.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Teachers worked collaboratively to develop and implement their reform work and transform student learning.</td>
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<td>• School context is extremely important in creating learning communities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Successful reform occurred when participants established an agenda for reform that addressed specific students’ needs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Participants noticed success when they implemented ideas to strengthen professional learning communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>STUDY</td>
<td>PURPOSE</td>
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| Hallinger, P., Bickman, L. & Davis, K. (1996) | To explore the nature and extent of the school principal’s effects on reading achievement | 87 U.S. elementary schools in Tennessee that participated in the state’s School Incentives Improvement Program (SIIP) | Quantitative – questionnaires | • Principals play an important role in school effectiveness.  
  • The relation between principal and school effectiveness will be better understood through the use of models that account for effects of the school context on a principal’s leadership.  
  • The effects of principal leadership on student learning should be examined in terms of theoretically relevant intervening variables as well as school outcomes.  
  • Studying the effectiveness of direct-effects on the effects of school principals is not theoretical – indirect effects are substantial to school effectiveness. |
| Down, B., Chadbourne, R., & Hogan, C. (2000) | To examine the stance taken by a group of Western Australian teachers to the introduction of compulsory performance management in 1997 | Teachers in Western Australia who were involved with the performance management system introduced by the Education Department of Western Australian (EDWA) | Qualitative – interviews | • Performance management is not working.  
  • Teachers’ feel they are not simply interchangeable resources who act out policies devised by those in power.  
  • Teachers want feedback based on professional teacher evaluations.  
  • Teachers want improvement strategies that reflect their work, allow insights with one another, and enforce high standards of performance activities. |
### Table 2.8 continued

Studies Related to Student Learning and Staff Professional Growth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>DESIGN</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</table>
| Auter, Levy, & Murnane (2002)| To formalize and test a simple theory of how the rapid adoption of computer technology—spurred by precipitous real price declines—changes the tasks performed by workers at their jobs and, ultimately, the demand for human skills. | Representative data on job task requirements for the years 1960 to 1998 from the Dictionary of Occupational titles (DOT) paired with employment data from Census and Current Population Survey samples. | Quantitative – data analysis | • Economic figures in the United States show a continuing decline in earnings opportunities for people who lack skills in expert thinking and complex communication — 2.2 million blue-collar jobs and 900,000 administrative support jobs.  
• There has been an increase of 1.9 million in technical, managerial, and professional jobs and a 2 million increase in the number of jobs in food services.  
• Advances in computerization have played a key role in job distribution and security.  
• Student assessment must include completion of tasks that today’s school leaders face.  
• Practicum experiences are most meaningful to students.  
• On-going communication between college professors is critical. The content of all course must complement each other.  
• Integration of technology into all university training is critical.  
• Activities should be designed to increase |
<p>| Barnett (2003)               | To determine the kinds of practices to which today’s school leaders are involved | School-based administrators (principals and assistant principals) and district-wide administrators (instructional supervisors, technology coordinators, assistant | Quantitative – survey   |                                                                                                     |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
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<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Waters, T., Marzano, R. J., &amp; McNulty, B. (2003)</td>
<td>To examine the effects of leadership practices on student achievement.</td>
<td>superintendents, and superintendents) from Morehead State University graduates and non-Morehead State graduates</td>
<td>70 studies involving 2,894 schools, approximately 1.1 million students, and 14,000 teachers</td>
<td>Quantitative – review of theoretical literature on leadership</td>
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<td>prospective school leaders’ proficiency in meeting national standards. An advisory committee composed of practitioners should be in place.</td>
<td></td>
<td>• The correlation between leadership and student achievement is .25. • Twenty-one specific leadership responsibilities significantly correlated with student achievement. • When leaders concentrate on the wrong school practices, they can negatively impact student achievement. • School leaders must not only focus improvement on effective classroom practices, but also understand the magnitude of change implied by these efforts. • Effective leaders promote cooperation and cohesion among their staffs and develop a shared vision.</td>
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<td>STUDY</td>
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| Timperley, H. S., (2005) | To track the leadership challenges through a change process involving the use of student achievement in professional development | An assistant principal, seven teachers, and the author as a consultant in Riverdale School in New Zealand | Qualitative and quantitative – interviews, anecdotal observation data, and Observation Survey data | • Improving the capacity of individuals and whole school organizations involves specific leadership skills  
• Instructional leaders must be knowledgeable about the use of student achievement data. Instructional leaders must challenge teachers’ low expectations of student achievement.  
• Instructional leaders must be able to relate professional development to the teaching practices which improve student achievement. |
### Table 2.9

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<th>STUDY</th>
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<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>DESIGN</th>
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</table>
| Retallick & Fink (2002) | To determine their schools’ capacity to build and sustain initiatives dealing with the changing educational environments in Ontario | Four project school principals, a sample of staff members in 1997 and 1998, and focus group interviews conducted with staff members in each school in 1999 | Qualitative – interviews | • The project was helpful and problematic in all schools  
• There were barriers to using some of the ideas of the project, but learning through experience and reflection had taken place concerning change.  
• When principals are knowledgeable about their schools’ cultures, they are able to develop a commitment from their staff to accept change.  
• Combining leadership skills that mobilize staff into action with effective organizational and managerial strategies make opportunities for change to be successful. |
### Table 2.10

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<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>DESIGN</th>
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</table>
| Day, C., Harris, A., & Hadfield, M. (2001) | To identify and examine how existing theories of effective leadership matched up to the practice of successful principals in times of change. | Four hundred participants including 36 principals, 92 teachers, 24 parents, 24 governors, and 24 students in twelve schools | Qualitative – interviews and content analysis | • Effective leaders are clear about their core values that permeate their thinking and actions.  
• Effective leaders are constantly and consistently managing several simultaneously competing sets of tensions successfully  
• Effective leaders must make tough decisions about leadership dilemmas exercising values-led contingency leadership.  
• Effective leaders were effective because they communicated clearly visions and values shared by all stakeholders and by developing climates of collaboration with a consistent focus on the betterment of students. |
| Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., Earl, L., Watson, N., Levin, B., & Fullan, M. (2004) | To determine the sources and distribution of leadership functions and how this distribution provides the strategic coordination necessary for successful large-scale reform | Teachers and heads in 10 case schools in England chosen from an initial random sample of 50 schools and two samples from 500 schools – one sample representing the National Literacy Strategies (NLS) and the other | Qualitative and Quantitative – observations, interviews, and surveys | • Distributed and hierarchical forms of leadership are incompatible.  
• Distributed forms of leadership are superior to other forms.  
• Successful school reform is dependent on the need to focus on the provision of resources. |
Table 2.10 continued

Studies Related to Collaboration: Families and Communities

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<th>STUDY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>initiatives within school systems</td>
<td>representing the National Numeracy Strategies (NNS)</td>
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### Table 2.11

Studies Related to Integrity, Fairness, and Ethics in Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
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<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</table>
| Murphy, J., Yff, J., & Shipman, N., (2000) | To provide early indications about how the ISLLC Standards are being employed to strengthen educational leadership throughout the nation | All the states and territories of the United States | Qualitative and Quantitative – observations, interviews, and surveys | • In focusing on strengthening school leadership, the ISLLC Standards initiative fits into a series of initiatives designed to improve school leadership in America.  
• The ISLLC Standards are beginning to take root in a number of the 50 states.  
• Effective school leaders are deeply intertwined with ethical issues through the obligatory and conventional school process.  
• The metaphor of educational leadership as moral leadership is central to the goal of equal educational opportunity.  
• Moral leadership suggested changing schooling from the historical molding of students to fit current, possibly dysfunctional, organizational forms to be responsive to all students in need of an education. |
Table 2.12

Studies Related to Politics, Socialization, Economics, Legalities, and Cultures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDY</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
<th>DESIGN</th>
<th>OUTCOMES</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hargreaves, A. (2002)</td>
<td>To examine the nature and effects of betrayal among colleagues in teaching</td>
<td>50 Canadian teachers in 15 elementary and secondary schools</td>
<td>Qualitative – interview and discussion groups</td>
<td>• Sustainable school improvement stimulates lasting gains in student achievement depends on teachers cooperating in strong professional communities.</td>
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<td>• Teachers in strong professional communities share passion for improving learning and inquire into the best ways to accomplish it.</td>
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<td>• Trust makes sharing possible, and betrayal is the agent that destroys it.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• If betrayal impedes improvement, it is important to understand more about the organizational conditions and policy strategies that incite it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaziel, H. (2003)</td>
<td>To identify how principals perceive their worlds and how their colleagues perceive them; to determine if male school principals differ from female in the frames that they employ; and to determine if managerial and</td>
<td>For the qualitative data, 30 primary principals enrolled in an inservice training program in educational leadership at Bar Ilan University (Israel) participated; For the quantitative data, 60 primary principals in Tel</td>
<td>Qualitative – interview; Quantitative – questionnaire</td>
<td>• Male principals differ from their counterparts in the frames they use, but they are not significant and tend to use structural frames more than female principals.</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Leadership effectiveness is strongly associated with the human-resources and political frames.</td>
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<td>• Management effectiveness according to principals’ self-ratings is associated with structural and human-resources frames.</td>
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<th>STUDY</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>leadership effectiveness are associated with certain frames</td>
<td>Aviv and 300 teachers</td>
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Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Effective leadership has been a phenomenon theorists have researched for over a century in the attempt to identify characteristics and styles which define the role (Fiedler & Chemers, 1974). Qualities that make an effective principal have also been researched as the role of principal has evolved over the years from that of a supervisory and managerial role to a role of instructional leader who, at the same time, establishes and supports the mission of the school through the empowerment of the faculty and staff and the success of the students (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Matthews & Crow, 2003; Seifert & Vornberg, 2002). However, the characteristics which define effective principal leadership have been ambiguous, and, in order to better ensure that competent principals are produced and placed in America’s schools, defining effective principalship is essential. In order for this to happen, a common language that exemplifies quality educational leadership had to be established (Boeckmann & Dickinson, 2001).

A common set of standards which expresses the knowledge, dispositions, and performance indicators that comprise effective educational leaders was created in 1996 (Council of Chief State School Officers, CCSSO, 1996). The ISLLC standards were designed for the purpose of offering a foundation for effective school leadership through a common language that defines appropriate leadership practices which best ensure student success (CCSSO). Although the ISLLC standards have expressed effects of quality educational leaders, linking these standards to effective practices has been difficult.
The ISLLC standards may define knowledge, dispositions, and performance indicators that comprise effective educational leaders, but the expectations of principals from local education agencies (LEA) and state departments of education continue to increase as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) has introduced to school leadership the issue of accountability (Wiener & Hall, 2004). Prior to NCLB, the implicit belief that student success was ultimately the responsibility of the principal had not challenged principal quality. In spite of this, studies have been conducted for many years with the intent to link principal effectiveness and student achievement (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Owings, Kaplan, & Nunnery, 2005; Thompson & Legler, 2003). Many researchers have failed to show statistically significant evidence that school leadership indeed impacts student achievement, yet high performing schools tend to have principals that possess the characteristics of effective principals.

However, a study recently completed in the state of Virginia by Owings, Kaplan, and Nunnery (2005) obtained significant results linking principal quality to student achievement and concentrated on specific attributes of leadership by using a rubric based on the ISLLC Standards for evaluating principals’ practices. In view of the history and defining role of the principalship, effective principal practice, and the basis of the ISLLC standards, it is reasonable to assume that if principals in practice today have adequate knowledge of the ISLLC standards, the quality of the principalship will be improved and/or enhanced. It is equally reasonable to assume that if principal quality is heightened, student achievement will increase, as well.

Considering that NCLB is demanding that schools be held accountable for the success of the students, and, due to the fact that principals are responsible for their
schools, the burden of schools meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under NCLB’s accountability system is ultimately placed on the principal (Wiener & Hall, 2004). Since Georgia’s public education system has a high number of schools that did not meet Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the year 2004-2005 (The Associated Press, 2004; GADOE, 2004), and no study to the researcher’s knowledge has been done on the competency of principals in Georgia, no conclusive data is available that discloses accurate explanations of why some Georgia students and schools are failing. In fact, Georgia, being one of the 24 states and organizations that constituted the Consortium which constructed the ISLLC standards has not required its leaders to be licensed according to the standards. Therefore, in light of these findings and presumptions, the purpose of this study was to determine if principal competency, as defined by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, predicts student achievement in public high schools in Georgia.

Research Questions

A study (Owings et al., 2005) conducted in the state of Virginia found a significant relationship between principal quality and student achievement. This researcher, therefore, in a similar study, sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does principal competency, as determined by the ISLLC standards, predict overall student achievement?

2. To what extent does the impact of principal competency on student achievement depend on the number of students who are on free and reduced-price lunches?
3. Are principals with lower principal competency placed in schools with lower socioeconomic levels?

4. To what extent does the impact of principal competency on student achievement depend on principal experience in the school?

Research Design

The purpose of this research was to examine how certain leadership competency, as measured by a survey based on the ISLLC standards, impacts student achievement. As such, the investigator largely employed quantitative research with a focus on survey methods. The advantage of this approach is that survey research methods, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999), are preferred for collecting data and describing the variability of certain characteristics or attributes of a population statistically in order to make inferences about a large group of people. Since the purpose of the survey was to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences could be made about principal competency, the survey design was preferred. Data was collected at one point rather than over time, therefore, the survey was cross-sectional (Cresswell, 2003) containing 18 quantitative items.

However, some components of the study called for qualitative data. For example, although the detailed survey served to collect data needed to determine principal competency which was compared to student achievement scores in each principal’s school, two open-ended questions were included on the survey in order to gather a personal view from the participants on principal quality. Following the survey, four interviews were conducted involving superintendents who had participated in the survey completion in order to gather a more in-depth perspective from the district leaders about
their perceptions of effective leadership. Therefore, these qualitative characteristics constitute a mixed-methods design.

Population

The target population of the study comprised 181 public school superintendents from the state of Georgia. However, since some districts in the state do not have high schools, this number was reduced to 171 school superintendents. The investigator was interested in determining how principals’ leadership competency affects student achievement; therefore, principals were the unit of analysis while superintendents were key informants.

Sampling Procedures

Key characteristics of individuals in the population that were included should be proportional to the sample. Therefore, the study was conducted using a random sampling of high school principals from each district in Georgia that had at least one high school. Since three consecutive years of test scores was used, principals included in the random search were those who had been at their schools for at least three years. There were several principals who did not meet this criterion, however, so another high school in the district was chosen, or, in the case of large districts, another random selection was conducted in that district. If the district did not have another high school, the district was excluded from the study. Age, gender, and ethnicity were not factors in this study.

Although the study included an evaluation of principals in the state of Georgia who had been at their schools three or more consecutive years, those participating in the study included 171 superintendents throughout Georgia. Having the superintendent, or a superintendent’s designee, complete the survey instrument was appropriate for the
following reasons: a. The superintendent is directly responsible for the evaluation of the principals in his/her district; b. The superintendent is ultimately responsible for his/her district meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Therefore, he/she must be knowledgeable of and attentive to the processes of the schools and progress of the students in the district, and, consequently, in each school.

The data was collected from the Georgia Department of Education which retains and publishes the personnel information on principals in the education system in the state of Georgia. Schools were identified through Georgia’s 16 Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs). One high school from each district that contains a high school throughout the state was included in the random search. A number was assigned to each high school in each school district in these regions. Alternative, psychoeducational facilities, and schools without the traditional title of high school (i.e. academy, magnet, or school) was not used in the random sampling. The reasoning for this was that alternative and psychoeducational facilities’ test scores are sent to the home school for each student in each district, and schools labeled academies, magnet schools, or schools may or may not have data from traditionally tested students. Without the inclusion of these schools in the random search, there was still an equitable representation of schools in the state. For each district a random sampling was performed. This sampling was modified in order to ensure that every school district in the state of Georgia that had at least one high school was included, that a representative sample was obtained, and that the principals chosen had been at their schools for at least three years. This type of sampling included purposive sampling with some districts in an attempt to include every eligible district.
Because the characteristics of the sample population were similar in that the subjects are all principals of public schools in the state of Georgia, the results of this study may be generalized to the population of principals in Georgia. Upon identifying principals throughout the state and permission was acquired for use in this study, the superintendents of each of the principals were sent a survey to complete which served as an evaluation instrument based on the knowledge, dispositions, and performance indicators of the ISLLC standards.

Instrumentation

Two instruments were employed for data collection in this research. They included the Survey of Principal Competencies and the Interview Questionnaire. The survey instrument was modified from a survey used in a previously published study in Kentucky to determine frequency of practice and preparedness related to ISLLC standards among Morehead State University graduates and non-Morehead State University graduates (Barnett, 2004). Secondary data was collected through the Georgia Department of Education. The Interview Questionnaire was designed by the researcher for this particular study. A description of the instruments follows.

Survey of Principal Competencies

This researcher examined high school principals in the state of Georgia as they are today and related their competency, as determined by a survey based on the ISLLC standards, to student achievement scores in their schools. The principal competency score, derived from the survey, served as the one of three independent variables, and student achievement scores as the dependent variable.
Permission was granted by Dr. Barnett November 8, 2005 to modify the survey in any way that was necessary in order to make it appropriate for this study. In the modification process only questions for the purpose of gathering demographic data on the subjects and their schools and two open-ended questions were added. The remaining 18 items were original from the Barnett (2004) study. The modified instrument was reviewed by educators closely involved with the ISLLC standards to ensure that the instrument was aligned with the intent of the professional standards.

The survey was cross-sectional, meaning that the primary data was collected only once (Cresswell, 2003), and contained 18 quantitative items, two dichotomous questions, and five questions regarding demographic data of the principal and school which were rated by the participant. A Likert scale (attitude scale) was used in the quantitative section of the survey which was assigned values 1 – 5 (1 = Very Ineffective; 2 = Ineffective; 3 = Fairly Effective; 4 = Effective; 5 = Very Effective).

The researcher’s purpose for this study was to determine if principal competency, as defined by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards, predicts student achievement in public high schools in Georgia. The subject instrument in the form of a survey emphasized leadership attributes that are necessary for effective school leaders as aligned in the ISLLC standards. A high score on the instrument indicated that the school leader is perceived by the superintendent as using, or having used, knowledge, dispositions, and performances that have been found to be effective in school leaders as defined by the ISLLC standards. A low score, on the other hand, indicated that the school leader is perceived by the superintendent not to have been using effective leadership practices. The inferences drawn from these scores indicated the
overall effectiveness of the school leaders and served as the first of three independent variables.

Identifying attributes of effective leadership through the ISLLC standards involves examining these standards which target specific areas of educational leadership in which expertise must be acquired by school leaders and setting up a rating scale of items which measure expertise in these areas. These areas of educational leadership include: 1. Vision of Learning; 2. Student Learning and Staff Professional Growth; 3. Organizational Management and Operations: Safe, Effective, and Efficient Learning Environment; 4. Collaboration: Families and Communities; 5. Integrity, Fairness, and Ethics in Learning; and 6. Politics, Socialization, Economics, Legalities, and Cultures.

These areas of educational leadership describe principal competency, the first of three independent variables, and were described through quantitative means using an ordinal and an interval measurement scale. An overall score on the survey was obtained and averaged, rank-ordering each participant from lowest (rank 1) to highest (rank 5) which was the single “principal competency” score. Subsequently, these scores were placed into quartiles according to their raw scores: Quartile 1 = 1-1.24; Quartile 2 = 1.25-2.49; Quartile 3 = 2.50-3.74; Quartile 4 = 3.75-5.00.

Reliability refers to score consistency from one administration of the instrument to another (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Since the survey was an adaptation of one used in a study in Kentucky to determine leadership qualities and the frequency of practice of the ISLLC performance indicators between graduates of Morehead State University and non-Morehead State University graduates (Barnett, 2004), the reliability for its use in this
study was determined and estimated through an internal-consistency method using the split-half procedure.

Interview Questionnaire

Qualitative data was necessary for this study in order to depict a deeper and more accurate view of superintendents’ perceptions about principal competency and the relationship of this competency to student achievement. An interview instrument was created by the researcher for interview purposes and contained 13 open-ended questions concerning items that dealt with principal effectiveness according to: 1. superintendents’ perspectives, 2. initiatives implemented in the schools, 3. principal characteristics, 4. leadership standards, 5. extraneous and pertinent factors within the school and school community, 6. principal tenure in a school, and 7. race and gender.

Pilot Study

Drawing correct conclusions and inferences from a study is dependent on the quality of the instrument used in the study. Therefore, in order to collect and analyze evidence for its appropriateness, correctness, meaningfulness, and usefulness of the inferences drawn from the data collected by using this instrument, the researcher conducted a pilot study.

Conducting the pilot study involved the researcher sending the survey electronically to five assistant principals in the Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools. A letter was sent electronically to these assistant principals that explained the study and contained a link to the electronic survey using SurveyMonkey.com (SurveyMonkey, 2006). The purpose of this study was to determine if principal competency, as defined by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC)
standards, predicts student achievement in public high schools in Georgia. The instrument emphasized leadership attributes that are necessary for effective school leaders as aligned in the ISLLC standards. Only two assistant principals completed the survey, evaluating their lead administrators. From the pilot study, however, this researcher was able to identify weaknesses and oversights in the survey and make modifications that made the survey more appropriate for this study. It was at this point that the researcher added questions to capture more demographic data and a question that would enable the researcher to identify the district of the participant.

Data Collection

Upon the completion of the pilot study and approval by the IRB of Georgia Southern University, the researcher completed a random selection of the eligible 171 school districts in the state of Georgia. All 171 schools/principals were coded into SPSS and permission from these principals was sought. A letter was sent electronically explaining the study and asking permission for their inclusion in this study. Principals were to respond electronically indicating their willingness to participate or their declination. They were also asked to indicate, if they chose not to participate, if the reason was due to their lack of the necessary three-year tenure in the school. When some did not respond, two distributions following the first were sent, each mailing acquiring more responses.

The Survey of Principal Competencies was created into an electronic survey by the researcher using SurveyMonkey.com (SurveyMonkey, 2006) and was sent electronically to the superintendents of the principals who gave permission to be used in
this study as a link in a letter explaining the study. The superintendents were asked to rate the principals on the ISLLC standards survey instrument.

The ultimate goal of survey research is to acquire information about large populations (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005), and mailing surveys electronically allowed the researcher to be able to reach individuals that have easy access to a computer and the Internet (Lyons, Cude, Gutter, & Lawrence, 2003). Superintendents who did not respond to the survey were emailed another letter encouraging participation in the research study with a survey attachment. This gave respondents an option of completing the survey electronically or in a hard copy version. Minimal response was gained through the electronic mailings, so a hard copy of the letter and the survey were sent to the non-respondents through the United States Postal Service.

Secondary data for this research including data for the random search, principals, superintendents, student test scores, and school poverty levels was obtained from the Georgia Department of Education. These data were needed in the random search to determine which principals were used in the study for evaluation by the superintendents of the state. Data about superintendents was also obtained from the Georgia Department of Education. This site gave the most updated information available concerning principals and superintendents in the school systems throughout the state of Georgia. Student test scores on the GHSGT and the school poverty levels were also the most updated information available concerning student achievement and the numbers of students in each school who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Since the scores on the instrument used in this study were used to determine the existing relationship between leadership competency and student achievement, criterion-
related evidence of validity, secondary data, were obtained through the gathering of data of student test scores in the subjects’ schools for the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005. This relationship was indicated by the correlation coefficient, and, in this study, the validity coefficient. Fraenkel and Wallen (2003) considered the validity coefficient to be obtained by correlating a set of scores to another set of scores. Therefore, principal competency was correlated to student achievement scores. These scores were averaged and placed into quartiles and are depicted through an expectancy table.

Grade 11 students’ scores on the GHSGT were chosen because all eleventh grade students take the GHSGT and are first time test takers. Students who do not pass the GHSGT the first time in all areas may take the test again in their areas of insufficiency. However, the GHSGT scores used in this study are scores taken from first-time test takers in order to acquire data from students in a similar situation and who are equally unfamiliar with the test.

Student test scores on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (GHSGT) in the areas of Language Arts and Mathematics were averaged over a three year span including the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005 for each school. The researcher then placed these schools into quartiles according to the distribution of the data. Specific quartiles were Quartile 1 = 75.16-80.91; Quartile 2 = 80.92-86.67; Quartile 3 = 86.68-92.43; and Quartile 4 = 92.44-98.14.

Principal competency, as determined by the Survey of Principal Competencies, was correlated to a second independent variable in the study which included the number of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in the school (poverty level).
School poverty levels were also the most updated information available concerning student achievement in Georgia high schools and the numbers of students in each school who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. These data were all coded according to percentages and then placed into quartiles and entered into SPSS. The specific Quartile data included: Quartile 1 = 6.66-26.41; Quartile 2 = 28.42-50.16; Quartile 3 = 50.17-71.91; and Quartile 4 = 71.92-93.66.

The third independent variable in this study that was also correlated to principal competency and student test scores was the principals’ number of years experience in the school. Data for the principals’ years of experience in the schools was gathered through the survey instrument and entered into the data input in quartiles according to the distribution of the data. Quartile One included the principals’ least number of years experience in the schools and Quartile Four included the principals’ most number of years experience in the schools.

Qualitative data was collected through survey questions and through interviews with four superintendents who completed the Survey of Principal Competencies. These superintendents were purposely chosen according to their willingness to participate and their proximity. Qualitative data was necessary for this study in order to depict a deeper and more accurate view of superintendents’ perceptions about principal competency and the relationship of this competency to student achievement. An interview instrument was created by the researcher for interview purposes and contained 13 open-ended questions concerning items that consisted of principal effectiveness according to the following areas: 1. superintendents’ perspectives, 2. initiatives implemented in the schools, 3. principal characteristics, 4. leadership standards, 5. extraneous and pertinent factors
within the school and school community, 6. principal tenure in a school, and 7. race and gender.

The interviews were semistructured and followed a protocol developed to elicit information derived from the *Survey of Principal Competencies* that were completed by the superintendents and that elaborated on some of the items on the survey. However, participants were encouraged to discuss related issues that were not directly addressed in the interview protocol. Interviews ranged in duration between 45 minutes and 1 hour and 30 minutes and were tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Data analysis consisted of examining the responses for patterns, connections, and themes.

Response Rate

Nonresponse occurs in almost all surveys and is considered to be a major problem in research (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003). Nonresponse is a problem because it is very likely that individuals who do not respond will differ in regard to answers to survey items (Fraenkel & Wallen). If, indeed, this is the case, conclusions drawn on the bias of respondents’ replies could be misrepresentative of the attitudes of the surveyed population (Cresswell, 2003; Fraenkel & Wallen). Response bias, as it is called, should be predicted and represented in the study. Fraenkel and Wallen considered that a low response rate is not necessarily a bad thing, but the possibility that a 90% response rate may offer quite different results from a 60% response rate is reason enough to attempt to obtain as many responses as possible.

The typical response rate for a mail survey is 25 to 40% (Newton & Rudestam, 1999). However, a better guideline for determining a response rate in a multivariate analysis, according to Newton and Rudestam, is a four to one ratio, or, ten responses for
every variable. Considering that this study has four variables, a minimum of 40
responses, or 23% of the surveyed population, is appropriate. Since only 62 principals
gave permission to be included in the study, and 62 superintendents were actually
surveyed, the researcher attempted to obtain a minimum of 23% return rate on the survey
instrument. The return, however, was 50%. Of those responses, six had to be discarded
because of the absence of the three-year tenure the principals were required to have.
Therefore, a 40% response rate was actually obtained.

Data Analysis

The researcher’s purpose for this study was to determine if principal competency,
as defined by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards,
predict student achievement in public high schools in Georgia. Accordingly, the
dependent variable (test scores) were averaged over a three year period. The percentage
of students passing the Language Arts and Mathematics sections of the Georgia High
School Graduation Test was calculated to give each school a “student achievement”
score. These scores were then placed into quartiles: Quartile 1 = 75.16-80.91; Quartile 2
= 80.92-86.67; Quartile 3 = 86.68-92.43; and Quartile 4 = 92.44-98.14. The three
independent variables were principal competency, the number of students eligible for free
or reduced-price lunch, and the principals’ years of experience in the schools.

The first of the three independent variables, the principal competency variable,
included six areas of educational leadership. First, the vision of learning encompasses the
schools’ and districts’ vision incorporation into the programs, curriculum, decision-
making, and school improvement efforts. The second area in this variable is student
learning and staff professional growth and includes administrators’ supervisory and
evaluative role supporting high expectations for students and student learning through policies and procedures. Third, organizational management and operations and providing a safe, effective, and efficient learning environment comprises the management role of leadership, including the fiscal aspects of the school and the daily operations which allow learning to take place. Collaboration with families and communities is the fourth variable and encompasses the school leaders’ involvement of stakeholders in the functions and processes of the school. The fifth area embraces all aspects of integrity, fairness, and ethics in learning and the school leaders’ ability to demonstrate upstanding values while protecting the rights of students and stakeholders. Finally, the sixth area in this variable is politics, socialization, economics, legalities, and cultures which comprise the politics of education and the school leaders’ ability to work with local and federal policies to increase student achievement.

A principal components analysis, used to create a composite index for principal competency to show it in a continuum, was performed by the researcher from the scores on the instrument. Principals were grouped into four equal-sized quartiles based upon this factor score. Quartile ranges were Q1 (low quality ratings) to Q4 (high quality ratings). The specific quartile scores included: Quartile 1 = 1.44-2.33; Quartile 2 = 2.34-3.22; Quartile 3 = 3.23-4.11; and Quartile 4 = 4.12-5.00. A principal component factor analysis was performed to determine students’ scores on the Georgia High School Graduation Test (grade 11) in the areas of Mathematics and Language Arts to create a single, regression-based factor score for years (2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005). Using factor scores creates a single variable to represent school-level achievement (the dependent variable) and removes the aggregate linear trend in scores across years by
making the mean school-level achievement score equal to 0 each year (Owings et al., 2005).

Research has determined that student achievement in schools is largely due to the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in the school (Bell, 2001; Brock & Groth; 2004; McGee, 2004; Owings et al., 2005). Because the findings in these studies show that the higher the numbers of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, the lower the level of student achievement, this variable was used in this study as the second independent variable. The percentage of students who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch was grouped into quartiles and entered into the input data with Quartile One being the lowest number of students eligible and Quartile Four being the highest number. The specific Quartile data included: Quartile 1 = 6.66-26.41; Quartile 2 = 28.42-50.16; Quartile 3 = 50.17-71.91; and Quartile 4 = 71.92-93.66.

The third independent variable in this study was the principals’ number of years experience in the school. Research has linked poor principalship to lack of experience (Papa, Lankford, & Wyckoff, 2002). Papa et al. suggested, from their study examining attributes of principals in the state of New York, that principals were entering the profession with inadequate experience. Afolabi, Nweke, and Stephens (2003) also indicated in their study of principals in the state of Georgia that the attrition rate of principals is high and that principals are leaving the profession to principals with less experience and quality.

Data for the principals’ years of experience in the schools was gathered through the survey instrument and entered into the data input in quartiles according to the distribution of the data. Quartile One included the principals’ least number of years
experience in the schools and Quartile Four included the principals’ most number of years experience in the schools. Specific quartile information included: Quartile 1 = 3-5 years; Quartile 2 = 6-8 years; Quartile 3 = 9-11 years, and Quartile 4 = 12+ years.

To test the relationship between these variables, using student test scores as the constant, multiple regression was used with the four quartiles predicting student achievement. The data received from the survey instrument was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 12.0. The SPSS software was used by the researcher to describe and analyze the research data.

The two dichotomous questions on the survey were tallied, and the results are discussed in the data analysis. They were reviewed by the researcher in the scoring procedure and compared to the score of quantitative items 8 – 25 with the researcher noting similarities and discrepancies among the answers in the two sections of the survey.

Summary

The establishment of public education for the good of the people has, in itself, been the cause for the numerous changes which have occurred through the years in the role education plays in our society and in the role of the principal as this leader who guides these changes. From the autocratic leader who simply directs teachers and manages the school facility, to the nurturing leader who develops caring communities within the school and takes charge of student success, the role of principal cannot be underestimated in this age of student academic accountability. With the creation of the ISLLC standards, a common knowledge base that defined proficiency in the field of educational leadership was established, offering a set of specific behaviors which serve as a guide that are proven to be successful in leadership practice and student success.
Principal competency, as defined by the ISLLC standards, was determined through a survey completed on high school principals by superintendents throughout the state of Georgia. Through the utilization of quantitative research methods, the researcher used the ratings on the ISLLC Standards survey to determine principal competency. Once principal competency was ascertained, student test scores were compared to establish whether or not principal competency predicts student achievement. Qualitative data was collected through follow-up interviews of superintendents conducted by the researcher to capture a deeper view of superintendents’ perceptions of principal competency.

The results of the analysis will benefit such groups as superintendents throughout school systems in the state of Georgia as well as those in other states, current and aspiring principals, the Georgia Department of Education, the Professional Standards Commission, and institutions of higher education by providing knowledge of Georgia’s current principals’ quality ratings according to the ISLLC standards and by verifying their effectiveness in their schools.
Table 3.1

Descriptive Item Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Survey Item Number</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Number of years principal has been in current position</td>
<td>Papa, Lankford, &amp; Wyckoff, 2002; Afolabi, Nweke, &amp; Stephens, 2003; Owings, 2005</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Gender of principal</td>
<td>Boeckmann &amp; Dickenson 2001; Afolabi, Nweke, &amp; Stephens 2003; Gaziel, H. 2003</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Race of principal</td>
<td>Afolabi, Nweke, &amp; Stephens 2003</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Is this school a Title I school?</td>
<td>Bell, 2001; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; McGee, 2004; Owings, 2005</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2

Quantitative Item Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Survey Item Number</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>The school/district’s vision is included in the development and implementation of the School/district’s Comprehensive Improvement Plan.</td>
<td>Davis, 1998; Bell, 2001; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; Hessel &amp; Holloway, 2003; Strahan, 2003</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>All stakeholders are involved and contribute to the school/district’s vision during the decision-making process.</td>
<td>Bell, 2001; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; Huffman &amp; Jacobson, 2003; Phillips, 2003; McGee, 2004</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Curriculum and programs are shaped by the school/district’s vision statement.</td>
<td>Deal &amp; Peterson, 1999; Leithwood &amp; Jantzi, 1999; Bell, 2001; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; Huffman &amp; Jacobson, 2003; Johnson &amp; Uline, 2003; McGee, 2004; Leithwood &amp; Riehl, 2005</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Various supervisory and evaluation models are employed.</td>
<td>Hallinger, Bickman, &amp; Davis, 1996</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Policies, lesson plans, teacher evaluations, and other data are used to ensure technology supports student achievement.</td>
<td>Down, Chadbourne, &amp; Hogan, 2000; Autor, Levy, &amp; Murnane, 2002; Barnett, 2002; Levy &amp; Murnane, 2004</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Policies and procedures are followed that support a culture of high expectations for students.</td>
<td>Campo, 1993; Leithwood &amp; Jantzi, 1999; Down, Chadbourne, &amp; Hogan, 2000; Bell, 2001; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; Hessel &amp;</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2 continued

Quantitative Item analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Survey Item Number</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Holloway, 2003; McGee, 2004; Johnson &amp; Uline, 2005; Timperley, 2005</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Stakeholder input is gathered to ensure fiscal resources are managed responsibly, efficiently, and effectively.</td>
<td>Doud &amp; Keller, 1998; Dunklee, 2000; Bell, 2001; Retallick &amp; Fink, 2002; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; Hessel &amp; Holloway, 2003; Barnett, 2004</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Daily operations are designed and managed to ensure success for all students.</td>
<td>Bell, 2001; Schwartz, 2001; Retallick &amp; Fink, 2002; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; McGee, 2004</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Budget is aligned to the goals in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan.</td>
<td>CED, 1994; Oswald, 1995; Doud &amp; Keller, 1998; Wade, 2001; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Communicates with all stakeholders (i.e. students, staff, parents, community members, etc.) frequently (multiple times each week).</td>
<td>Bell, 2001; Day, Harris, &amp; Hadfield, 2001; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; Pashiardis, 2003; McGee, 2004</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Treatment of stakeholders is equitable.</td>
<td>Sebring &amp; Bryk, 2000; Hessel &amp; Holloway, 2003; McGee, 2004; Johnson &amp; Uline, 2005</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Community resources are effectively used for the benefit of the students.</td>
<td>Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; Leithwood &amp; Riehl, 2003; Leithwood, Jantzi, Earl, Watson, Levin, &amp; Fullan, 2004</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2 continued

Quantitative Item Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Survey Item Number</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Rights and confidentiality of students, faculty, and staff are protected.</td>
<td>Murphy, Yff, &amp; Shipman, 2000; Hessel &amp; Holloway, 2003; Johnson &amp; Uline, 2005</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Values, beliefs, and attitudes are demonstrated that inspire others to higher levels of performance.</td>
<td>Hargreaves, 2002; Fullan, 2003; Sergiovanni, 2005</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>The school/district invites public input and involvement through the use of surveys, public forums, etc.</td>
<td>Hessel &amp; Holloway, 2003</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Understands the impact of state and federal decisions on the local educational systems.</td>
<td>Williams, 2001; Hessel &amp; Holloway, 2003</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Works with local agencies to supplement school/district initiatives.</td>
<td>Doud &amp; Keller, 1998; Hargreaves, 2002; Retallick &amp; Fink, 2002; Huffman &amp; Jacobson, 2003; Sergiovanni, 2005</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Communicates with local, state, and federal leaders in an effort to impact decisions that will result in an increase in student achievement.</td>
<td>Johnson, 1998; Hart, 1999; Gaziel, 2003; Hessel &amp; Holloway, 2003</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3.3

#### Qualitative Item Analysis

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Do you feel this principal has been effective in addressing student learning at his/her school?</td>
<td>Davis &amp; Hensley, 1999; Pashiardis, Bell, 2001; 2003; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; Waters, Marzano, &amp; McNulty, 2003; Leithwood, 2004; McGee, 2004; Reeves, 2004; Owings, 2005</td>
<td>Survey Item 6, Interview Question 1</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Do you feel that leadership standards such as those produced by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) address the qualities necessary for effective leadership?</td>
<td>Murphy, Yff, &amp; Shipman, 2000; Hessel &amp; Holloway, 2003; Engler, 2004; Owings, Kaplan, &amp; Nunnery, 2005</td>
<td>Survey Item 7, Interview Question 4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. What initiatives has he implemented that have been successful?</td>
<td>Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; McGee, 2004</td>
<td>Interview Question 2</td>
<td>1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What is the most important characteristic of effective principals?</td>
<td>Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; McGee, 2004; Owings, Kaplan, &amp; Nunnery, 2005</td>
<td>Interview Question 3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How do you evaluate your principals?</td>
<td>GADOE, 1992; Davis &amp; Hensley, 1999; Lashway, 2003; Reeves 2004</td>
<td>Interview Question 5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. What factors do you feel contribute to the success level of a principal?</td>
<td>Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; McGee, 2004; Owings, Kaplan, &amp; Nunnery, 2005</td>
<td>Interview Question 6</td>
<td>1, 2, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Do you think the student achievement (test scores/AYP) in the school and the poverty level of the school should be considered when evaluating principals?</td>
<td>GADOE, 1992; Davis &amp; Hensley, 1999; Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; Lashway, 2003;</td>
<td>Interview Question 7</td>
<td>1, 2, 3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.3 continued

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Item Number</th>
<th>Research Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9. How does the principal leadership in an impoverished school differ from that in a school that has a low poverty rate?</td>
<td>Brock &amp; Groth, 2003; McGee, 2004</td>
<td>Interview Question 8</td>
<td>2, 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Do you feel longevity at a school makes for better student achievement?</td>
<td>Papa, Lankford, &amp; Wyckoff, 2002; Afolabi, Nweke, &amp; Stephens, 2003; Owings, 2005</td>
<td>Interview Question 9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Does principal experience affect student achievement?</td>
<td>Papa, Lankford, &amp; Wyckoff, 2002; Afolabi, Nweke, &amp; Stephens, 2003; Owings, 2005</td>
<td>Interview Question 10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. How important is the race of the principal in addressing the school culture?</td>
<td>Afolabi, Nweke, &amp; Stephens 2003</td>
<td>Interview Question 11</td>
<td>2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. How do women and men differ in their approaches to principal leadership?</td>
<td>Boeckmann &amp; Dickenson 2001; Afolabi, Nweke, &amp; Stephens 2003; Gaziel, H. 2003</td>
<td>Interview Question 12</td>
<td>2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REPORT OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

The establishment of public education for the good of the people has, in itself, been the catalyst of the change that has occurred in educational leadership through the years; and the standards-based movement in education, the catalyst of the creation of the ISLLC standards. The ISLLC standards established a common knowledge base that defined proficiency in the field of educational leadership and offered a set of specific behaviors which have since served as a guide to proven successful leadership practice and student success.

The researcher’s purpose for this study was to define principal competencies according to the ISLLC standards through a survey completed on high school principals by superintendents throughout the state of Georgia, and determine the level of principal competency of these principals as perceived by their superintendents. Through the utilization of quantitative and qualitative research methods, the researcher used the ratings on the ISLLC Standards survey to determine the level of principal competency. Follow-up interviews with superintendents were also conducted by the researcher to acquire a deeper perspective of superintendents’ perceptions of principal competency. Once this principal competency was ascertained, student test scores were compared to establish whether or not principal competencies predict student achievement.

Research Questions

A study (Owings et al., 2005) conducted in the state of Virginia found a significant relationship between principal quality and student achievement. This
researcher, therefore, in a similar study, sought to answer the following research questions:

1. To what extent does principal competency, as determined by the ISLLC standards, predict overall student achievement?
2. To what extent does the impact of principal competency on student achievement depend on the number of students who are on free and reduced-price lunches?
3. Are principals with lower principal competency placed in schools with lower socioeconomic levels?
4. To what extent does the impact of principal competency on student achievement depend on principal experience in the school?

Research Design

The researcher’s purpose for this research was to examine how leadership competency, as measured by a survey based on the ISLLC standards, impacts student achievement. As such, the investigator largely employed quantitative research with a focus on survey methods. Since the researcher’s purpose of for the survey was to generalize from a sample to a population so that inferences could be made about principal competency, the survey design was preferred by this researcher. Survey data was collected at one point rather than over time, therefore, the survey was cross-sectional (Cresswell, 2003) containing 18 quantitative items and five dichotomous questions regarding demographic data of the principals and their schools.

However, some components of the study called for qualitative data. For example, although the detailed survey served to collect data needed to determine principal competency which was then compared to student achievement scores in each principal’s
school, two open-ended questions were included on the survey in order to gather a personal view from the participants on superintendents’ perception of principal competency. Follow-up interviews were also conducted using an interview instrument containing 13 items to capture a deeper view of superintendents’ perceptions of principal competency – more than could be obtained from a questionnaire or survey. Therefore, these qualitative characteristics constituted a mixed-methods study.

Data on Respondent Characteristics

Respondents

A random search was conducted in each district in the state of Georgia that contained at least one high school. In districts which contained only one high school, the one high school/principal was chosen. One hundred seventy-one principals (high schools) were identified initially in the study. The population of the schools and numbers of students in the schools who were eligible for free or reduced-price lunch was not a consideration in the search, nor was the gender, age, and ethnicity of the principals. Although “years of experience” was not a consideration for principals’ inclusion in the study, one criterion of the principals was that they must have been at their present schools during the years of the test scores that were studied. The years included school years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005.

Respondents in the study fell into four categories. The first category of respondents included the principals who did not want to be included in the study. This number included approximately 23% of the total number of principals which were initially identified.
The second category of respondents included principals who were not eligible to participate. Approximately 29% of the principals who responded in the initial 171 chosen or randomly selected were not principals during the required school years. They had all come to their present schools within the last three years, varying in the length they had been in their schools from one to three years.

The third and fourth categories of respondents included the two groups of respondents that were actually included in this study. The third group of respondents consisted of principals from high schools of all socioeconomic levels throughout the state of Georgia who gave consent to be involved in the study and consisted of approximately 36% of the ones who responded in the initial 171 chosen or randomly selected. However, considering the number of principals ineligible for inclusion in this study, this percentage could be considered approximately 51% of the (assumed) eligible principals who were chosen or randomly selected. These principals were men and women who had been at their present schools for at least three years, these years including 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005. Gender, age, and ethnicity were not a consideration.

Respondents from the fourth group of participants included superintendents or superintendents’ designees of the principals in the third group of respondents. Although district sizes varied, the superintendents were the chief executive officers of the school systems and were responsible for the annual evaluation of the principals. The number of respondents in this category consisted of 50% of the principals who chose to be included in this study. Of this 50%, six principals/districts had to be excluded due to the ineligibility of the principals. They had only two years experience at their present
schools. The principals in the actual surveyed group, as shown in Table 4.1, consisted of 92% male and 92% Caucasian. Only 6% were African American and 6% were female.

Table 4.1
Demographic Profiles of Principal Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quartile</th>
<th>Principal’s Gender</th>
<th>Principal’s Race</th>
<th>Principal’s Years in School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 3</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 2</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 3</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>African American</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 4</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 5</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 6</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Demographic Profiles of Principal Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quartile</th>
<th>Principal’s Gender</th>
<th>Principal’s Race</th>
<th>Principal’s Years in School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal 7</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 8</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 9</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 10</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 11</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 12</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 13</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 14</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 15</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 16</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 17</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Demographic Profiles of Principals’ Schools

The demographic profile of the schools and principals represented in the fourth category of respondents and the ones used in this study, depicted in Table 4.2, were
examined according to several criteria including the Language Arts and Mathematics score averages of the Georgia High School Graduation Test including the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005, the principal competency scores from the *Survey of Principal Competencies* completed by the superintendents, the number of students in each school eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (the poverty level of the schools), and the principals’ number of years of experience in the schools. Each of these variables was placed into quartiles according to the distribution of data. Since the Language Arts and Mathematics test score average was the constant (dependent variable) in the data analysis, the demographics of the schools were examined according to the quartiles of test score averages for the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005 on the GHSGT.

Quartile 1 represented schools that had the lowest student achievement scores in the distributive data ranging from 75.16 – 80.91. Only one school and principal fell into this category. The competency score of this principal was also the lowest of all the principals included in the data analysis with an average of 1.44 and, also, whose school had the highest number of students on free or reduced-price lunch with a population of 256 and an ethnicity makeup of 83% black, 11% white, and 6% multiracial students. The principal of this school had been at the school for six years.

The distribution of the data included no school in Quartile 2 with student achievement ranging from 80.92 – 86.67. Quartile 3, however, included five schools and principals with student achievement ranging from 86.68 – 92.43. Competency scores of these principals ranged in the third and fourth quartiles of the principal competency scores in the distribution with the mean of 4.41. This competency score mean actually falls into the highest quartile of principal competency scores – Quartile 4. The number of
students on free or reduced-price lunch in these schools ranged in the second and third quartiles of the poverty levels with a mean of 51.86 – Quartile 3 of the poverty levels. School populations for these five schools ranged from 509 to 1,484 (M = 1046.80) with an ethnicity composition of 40% white, 50.4% black, and 5% Hispanic students. Asian and multiracial students did not make up a significant population. Principal experience in the schools for principals in this quartile ranged from five to 12 years with a mean of 7.8 years.

Finally, Quartile 4 represented schools that had the highest student achievement scores in the distributive data ranging from 92.44 – 98.14. The majority of the schools and principals fell into this quartile with 19 schools and principals being represented. Competency scores of these principals ranged in the third and fourth quartiles of the principal competency scores in the distribution with the mean of 4.14. This competency score mean, like that of the principals in Quartile 3, fell into the highest quartile of principal competency scores – Quartile 4. The number of students on free or reduced-price lunch in these schools varied among quartiles one, two, and three of the poverty levels with a slight majority of eight schools being in the lowest poverty level quartile. Six schools in the quartile of highest student achievement were in Quartile 3 of the poverty level quartiles followed by five schools in Quartile 2 of the poverty levels. The mean of the number of free or reduced-price lunches for schools in Quartile 4 of student achievement was 31.69 and falls in Quartile 2 of poverty levels. School populations ranged from 451 to 2,308 (M = 1119.21), with an ethnicity structure of 66% white, 24% black, and 4% Hispanic students. Principal experience in the schools for principals in this
quartile ranged from three to nine years with a mean of 5.23 years – the lowest quartile of principal experience.

Table 4.2

Demographic Profiles of Principal Respondents’ Schools and Competency Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quartile</th>
<th>Competency Score</th>
<th>Score Averages</th>
<th>Poverty Index</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Ethnic Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>W  B  H  A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td>75.16</td>
<td>93.66</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>.11  .83  0  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>4.66</td>
<td>92.16</td>
<td>61.00</td>
<td>920</td>
<td>.53  .35  .09  .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 2</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>86.99</td>
<td>57.66</td>
<td>906</td>
<td>.31  .65  .01  .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 3</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>90.66</td>
<td>44.00</td>
<td>1484</td>
<td>.28  .52  .15  .03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 4</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>89.16</td>
<td>46.00</td>
<td>1415</td>
<td>.30  .65  .01  .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 5</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>91.99</td>
<td>50.66</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>.60  .35  .04  .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 1</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>94.66</td>
<td>65.66</td>
<td>1177</td>
<td>.33  .66  .01  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 2</td>
<td>4.11</td>
<td>94.00</td>
<td>67.33</td>
<td>461</td>
<td>.45  .53  .02  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 3</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>92.99</td>
<td>58.00</td>
<td>1096</td>
<td>.41  .58  .01  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 4</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>93.83</td>
<td>50.66</td>
<td>869</td>
<td>.57  .39  .02  .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 5</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>93.49</td>
<td>56.33</td>
<td>509</td>
<td>.44  .55  .01  0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 6</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>97.16</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>1224</td>
<td>.81  .10  .03  .01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 (continued)

Demographic Profiles of Principal Respondents’ Schools and Competency Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quartile</th>
<th>Competency Score Quartile</th>
<th>Score Averages</th>
<th>Poverty Index</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Ethnic Groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quartile 4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 7</td>
<td>3.55</td>
<td>92.83</td>
<td>42.66</td>
<td>694</td>
<td>.50 .47 0 .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 8</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>98.16</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>1300</td>
<td>.54 .39 .03 .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 9</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>93.66</td>
<td>21.00</td>
<td>1447</td>
<td>.55 .38 .04 .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 10</td>
<td>3.77</td>
<td>97.33</td>
<td>6.66</td>
<td>2308</td>
<td>.88 .02 .07 .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 11</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>95.16</td>
<td>17.33</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>.46 .13 .15 .24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 12</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>94.49</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td>1384</td>
<td>.76 .14 .04 .05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 13</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>94.00</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>474</td>
<td>.81 .13 .03 .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 14</td>
<td>3.94</td>
<td>94.33</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>451</td>
<td>.92 .07 0 .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 15</td>
<td>4.61</td>
<td>94.49</td>
<td>21.66</td>
<td>1655</td>
<td>.83 .03 .11 .02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 16</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>95.66</td>
<td>39.66</td>
<td>622</td>
<td>.89 0 .08 .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 17</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>94.33</td>
<td>38.66</td>
<td>750</td>
<td>.98 0 0 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 18</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>92.83</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>1243</td>
<td>.56 .40 .02 .01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal 19</td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>95.66</td>
<td>22.00</td>
<td>1605</td>
<td>.84 .14 .01 .01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. School Ethnic Groups are reported in percentages where C = Caucasian, B = Black, H = Hispanic, and A = Asian.*
Findings on Quantitative Analysis

The percentages of students passing the GHSGT underwent a principal components analysis to generate a single regression-based factor score for each school, averaging Language Arts and Mathematics scores for the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005. These scores were then grouped into quartiles Q1 (low ratings) to Q4 (high ratings). A principal components analysis of individual item scores was performed to generate a single “principal competency” regression-based factor score. Principals were then grouped into quartiles Q1 (low ratings) to Q4 (high ratings) based on this factor score. The poverty level of each school was taken from the percentage of students who are eligible in each school for free or reduced-price lunch. These percentages were grouped into quartiles Q1 (low poverty) to Q4 (high poverty). The principals’ number of years experience in their schools was grouped into quartiles Q1 (least number of years) to Q4 (most number of years) according to the distribution of data.

A simple linear regression (see Tables 4.4, 4.6, 4.8), was calculated to predict student test scores based on principal competency, the number of students eligible for free or reduced-priced lunch in the school (poverty level of the school), and the principal’s number of years experience in the school.

Following the simple linear regression calculation on each of the independent variables (principal competency, poverty level, and years of experience), a multiple linear regression (see Table 4.3) was calculated to predict student test scores based on principal competency, the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunches in the school (poverty level of the school), and the principals’ years experience in the present school. With all the variables taken together, a significant regression equation was found
(F[3, 21] = 5.937, p<.05), with an $R^2$ of .459, Adjusted $R^2 = .382$. Students’ predicted test scores are equal to $3.770 – .273 \times \text{(COMPETENCY)} + -.348 \times \text{(POVERTY)} + -.193 \times \text{(YEARS)}$, where competency is measured in averages, poverty is measured in percentages and principals’ years of experience in a school of students are measured in years. All were grouped in quartiles. The adjusted $R^2 = .382$ anticipates the amount of shrinkage that would be observed if this study were to be replicated with a larger sample size. This indicates that approximately 38% of the variability in the criterion variable is predictable on the basis of the three predictor variables. In other words, the principal competency factor score of the principal, the poverty level of the school, and the principal’s years of experience in the school, taken together, accounted for about 38% of the variability in student test scores on the Georgia High School Graduation Test.

Table 4.3

Multiple Regression Predicting Student Achievement (Score Averages), Principal Competency, Poverty Level, and Principals’ Years of Experience in a School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>5.250</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.750</td>
<td>5.937</td>
<td>.004a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>6.190</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>.295</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11.440</td>
<td>24</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The predictors are COMPETENCY, POVERTY, and YEARS and the dependent variable is AVERAGES.
Research Question 1: To what extent does principal competency as determined by the ISLLC standards predict overall student achievement?

A simple linear regression, as shown in Table 4.4, was calculated predicting student test scores based on the principal competency score on the Survey of Principal Competencies. A significant regression equation was found ($F[3, 21] = 4.672, p < .05$), with an $R^2$ of .169 and revealed a significant relationship (.041, $p < .05$) between principal competency and student achievement. Based upon the results, principals with high competency scores increased student achievement more than principals with low competency scores.

Table 4.4

Simple Linear Regression Involving Principal Competency and Student Achievement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE_B$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test score averages (Constant)</td>
<td>2.417</td>
<td>.578</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal competency</td>
<td>.371</td>
<td>.172</td>
<td>.411</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The dependent variable (Constant) is the student test score averages.

The multiple linear regression calculation, as depicted in Table 4.5, however, did not reveal a significant relationship between principal competency and student achievement (.079, $p > .05$). These results suggest that, when taken together with poverty and principal experience in a school, principal competency was not a predictor of student achievement. In other words, the two independent variables depress the effect of principal competency in student achievement.
Table 4.5

Multiple Regression Predicting Student Achievement (Score Averages), Principal Competency, Poverty Level, and Principals’ Years of Experience in a School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE\ B$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test score averages (Constant)</td>
<td>3.770</td>
<td>.648</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal competency</td>
<td>.273</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.302</td>
<td>.079</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty level of the school</td>
<td>-.348</td>
<td>.122</td>
<td>-.471</td>
<td>.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal’s years experience</td>
<td>-.193</td>
<td>.137</td>
<td>-.229</td>
<td>.173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The dependent variable (Constant) is the student test score averages.

*Research Question 2: To what extent does the impact of principal competency on student achievement depend on the number of students who are on free and reduced priced lunches?*

A simple linear regression (see Table 4.6) was calculated predicting student test scores based on the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. A significant regression equation was found ($F[1, 23] = 10.538, p < .05$), with an $R^2$ of .314 and revealed a significant negative relationship ($-.414, p < .05$) between student test scores and the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. This suggests that the socioeconomic status of the school had a significant correlation to student achievement in that the higher the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in a school, the lower the student achievement scores. Increased student
achievement was found in schools with lower numbers of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

Table 4.6
Simple Linear Regression Involving Student Achievement and Poverty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE\ B$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>$Sig.$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test score averages (Constant)</td>
<td>4.525</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty level of the school</td>
<td>-.414</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>-.561</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The dependent variable (Constant) is the student test score averages

A multiple linear regression, as depicted in Table 4.5 also revealed a significant regression between the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and student test scores ($p < .05$). This implies that the socioeconomic status of the school had a significant correlation to student achievement in that the higher the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in a school, the lower the student achievement scores. Increased student achievement was found in schools with lower numbers of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

In order to determine if the impact of principal competency on student achievement defers based on the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, the chi-square test of independence, as shown in Table 4.7, was performed. A significant effect was found ($\chi^2[9, N = 25] = 27.784, p < .05$). The competency scores of principals in schools where the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch is high, student achievement is more likely to be negatively impacted. In other
words, with $\chi^2$ of 27.784, results indicate that principal competency depends on school poverty. This finding is also consistent with the one on Table 4.6 in which a school poverty index depresses the effect of principals’ competency on student achievement.

Table 4.7.
Effect of School Poverty on Principal Competency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>27.784</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>11.368</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear</td>
<td>.945</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.331</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Association N of Valid Cases</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. a. 16 cells (100.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 04.

Research Question 3: Are principals with lower Principal Competency scores placed in schools with lower-socioeconomic levels?

Based on the simple linear regression which was calculated predicting student test scores based on the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and the follow-up chi-square test of independence to determine if the impact of principal competency on student achievement was dependent on the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, data suggests that principals with lower competency are placed in schools with higher numbers of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
Research Question 4: To what extent does the impact of principal competency on student achievement depend on principal experience in the school?

A simple linear regression, as shown in Table 4.8, was calculated predicting the extent the impact of principal competency on student achievement depends on principal experience in the school. The regression equation was not significant ($F[1, 23] = 2.45$, $p > .05$) with an $R^2$ of .057. A principal’s years of experience in a school is not a predictor of student achievement.

Table 4.8.
Simple Linear Regression Involving Student Achievement and Principal Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>$B$</th>
<th>$SE B$</th>
<th>$\beta$</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Test score averages (Constant)</td>
<td>4.100</td>
<td>.300</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal’s years experience</td>
<td>-.262</td>
<td>.168</td>
<td>-.310</td>
<td>.131</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The dependent variable (Constant) is the student test score averages

A multiple linear regression, as depicted in Table 4.5, revealed an insignificant regression, as well, between the years of experience a principal has in the present high school and student achievement. An inverse relationship ($-.193, p < .05$) and a significance factor ($.173, p < .05$) between the number of years a principal has been in the high school and the average test score in the school was found. The number of years of principal experience in the same high school is not a predictor of student achievement.
Findings on Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data were gathered through short answer and dichotomous questions on the *Survey of Principal Competencies* and through interviews of superintendents or their designees, purposely chosen by their willingness to participate and their proximity to the researcher, concerning the effectiveness of school leadership and student success. Several themes emerged from the researcher’s interviews with superintendents that coincided with the open-ended questions on the *Survey of Principal Competencies*. These consisted of principal effectiveness according to: 1. superintendents’ perspectives, 2. initiatives implemented in the schools, 3. principal characteristics, 4. leadership standards, 5. extraneous and pertinent factors within the school and school community, 6. principal tenure in a school, and 7. race and gender. The end result of this data collection process was the identification of four themes central to the competency level of a principal and to student achievement in the school. These four facets are: 1. Interpersonal and Communication Skills, 2. Culture Building (Shared Values), 3. High Expectations for Students, and 4. High Quality Faculty and Staff.

*Interpersonal and Communication Skills*

Superintendents were asked questions which consisted of characteristics of effective principals. Each participant included behaviors of leadership that were necessary for effectiveness in a school. Some suggested that good management skills are obviously important for the school to be able to function properly. “They have to have the ability to manage as ‘premadonnas’,,” said one superintendent. He continued that principals have to be outstanding stars, but, at the same time, cannot destroy morale.
Intelligence is another necessary trait. One superintendent felt strongly that maintaining the persona of the principal as the instructional leader of the school is an extremely important characteristic for effective principals. Another superintendent participant stated this similarly, but added that a principal cannot be the only instructional leader. “They (principals) have to rely on teacher leaders.” Important to all participants, however, was the attribute of interpersonal and communication skills that are absolutely imperative in dealing with parents, faculty, and the school community (the stakeholders). “They have to have people skills,” said one superintendent. Another stated, “The kids and the parents are our customers, and they have to be treated as such.”

Culture Building

Directly related to interpersonal and communication skills, superintendent participants all stated, is the skill of building and fostering a culture in the school where shared values exist among the students, faculty, and all stakeholders. For students to be successful, all members of the community must have values that are shared by all and where schools are considered a place of honor and where there is harmony among the members of the school community.

All participants stated that building a culture cannot take place overnight, and it is no easy task. One superintendent felt that a principal must remain in a position long enough to make a mark on a school and still maintain the respect of the faculty and staff. Principals who remain in a position for many years and who near retirement age run the risk of becoming “burned out” or complacent. For this reason, many superintendents move principals after several years. Principal longevity in a school can be very helpful
for student success, but only if the principal remains active and continues to make the necessary changes in education as education mandates change and as society changes.

*High Expectations for Students*

Societal changes and socioeconomic circumstances cannot change the expectations principals and faculties have for students. The belief that all students can learn is necessary for school leaders to be effective and is a statement that all participants used. “Student success and expectations should not be different,” stated one superintendent. Although impoverished schools pose a challenge to school leadership, principals must know the needs of the students and faculty and how to address them.

One need, and a big block to the student success rate that one superintendent sees involving impoverished children, is the lack of access to technology. Many students do not have computers in their homes. Students and parents suffer, consequently, if the school administration and faculty do not take this into consideration when assigning homework or when trying to communicate with parents. Homework is an issue in impoverished schools. One superintendent stated that some students don’t have lights at home, so homework is not important or cannot be completed at home.

“The way a person deals with parents of impoverished students is important,” said one participant, “…and some principals are well-suited for that environment.” They and their faculties “must be able to deal with students of all levels.” One superintendent’s solution to this was to “treat all students as if they are gifted and talented.”

*High Quality Faculty and Staff*

Choosing the right people is not only a good practice for principals in impoverished schools, but one that all superintendent participants feel effective principals
should use as they build their faculties and their school cultures. One participant stated the necessity to have a competent staff and the need to listen to their recommendations. “Principals need to get the right instructional people working in the school who can implement district initiatives…This is the key to being able to delegate and build teacher leaders,” one superintendent said.

The two questions contained on the *Survey of Principal Competencies* and that were asked in the interview involved principal effectiveness in addressing student learning and the importance of leadership standards. The results follow.

*Principal Effectiveness in Addressing Student Learning*

Superintendent respondents were asked if the principal they were evaluating for this study addressed student learning. Interestingly, no matter what the ratings on the *Survey of Principal Competencies*, 93% of the respondents reported on the survey that the principal had effectively addressed student learning at his or her school.

Four out of four superintendent participants who were interviewed believed the principal in their district who was surveyed had been very effective in addressing student learning. When asked what these principals had done that made them effective according to the superintendents’ perspectives, many reasons were given.

One superintendent said that the principal had created an environment where teachers come together to examine student data. “He is able to identify major areas where improvement is needed. Another superintendent discussed the positive atmosphere the principal had created. Creating the positive environment was attributed to bolstering the faculty and creating a school within a school to eliminate the “largeness” of the school.
Meeting with the administrative staff and department heads regularly to go over curriculum is an effective practice one principal does. He is also “out and about” in the classrooms to see where the work is getting done and what needs to be done to improve.

“All students should be entitled to a full scholarship to the school of their choice,” said one superintendent. “Working with the counselors to boost the chances of students receiving scholarships is one initiative that principal has done well.”

Importance of Leadership Standards

Leadership standards such as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and their indicators are research based and recognize the qualities of effective school leadership. Most superintendent respondents in this study (93%) reported that they feel leadership standards are important in addressing the qualities necessary for effective leadership.

Follow-up interviews with superintendents revealed that all participants felt that leadership standards such as the ISLLC standards address the qualities necessary for effective leadership. “They are a guide, but are not an absolute,” said one participant. Another superintendent agreed that standards are not absolute. “Leadership is an art,” he stated, “…innate, born, and developed long before we get to graduate school.”

Although all superintendents felt that the ISLLC standards address the qualities necessary for effective leadership, three of the four superintendents use the Georgia Leadership Evaluation Instrument (GLEI) to evaluate their principals. One superintendent uses his own evaluation instrument that involves a combination of things within the district. Some of these include gathering data from the faculty, parents, and auxiliary services, examining student achievement data, and the superintendent’s data which
involves interactions with the principals. None of the superintendents considered the ISLLC standards or any leadership standards in their evaluation process, however.

Summary

The researcher’s purpose for this study was to define principal competency according to the ISLLC standards through a survey completed on high school principals by superintendents throughout the state of Georgia and determine the level of principal competency of these principals as it is perceived by the superintendents. Through the utilization of quantitative and qualitative research methods, the researcher used the ratings on the ISLLC Standards survey to determine the level of principal competency. Once this principal competency was ascertained, student test scores were compared to establish whether or not principal competency predicts student achievement.

Because research shows that other factors contribute to the perceived competency of a principal or to student achievement, variables other than the principal competency variable were included in the data analysis. These variables included the number of students in the schools who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and the principals’ years of experience in the schools.

A simple and multiple linear regression was conducted involving these four variables with student test scores being the constant or dependent variable. The researcher’s findings from the simple linear regression show that a significant relationship exists between student test scores and principal competency as well as the number of students in a school who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch. The Chi-square test of independence also showed that a significant relationship exists between principal competency and high poverty schools, meaning that students who rated lower
on principal competency were also in the schools with the lowest student achievement. A principal’s years of experience in a school was not a significant factor.

Following the simple linear regression, a multiple linear regression was conducted. The multiple linear regression showed a significant relationship between student test scores and the poverty level of the school, but not between student test scores and principal competency. A significance between student achievement and the principals years of experience in a school was still nonexistent.

Results from the qualitative data show that participants felt leadership standards such as the ISLLC standards do include the qualities necessary for effective school leadership; but, overall, standards were not considered in the evaluations of the principals who were surveyed. Certain qualities or practices are included, however, and some of these are: 1. Interpersonal and Communication Skills, 2. Culture Building (Shared Values), 3. High Expectations for Students, and 4. High Quality Faculty and Staff.

School leadership is a multi-faceted phenomenon. Data show many results and educational leaders have many opinions, but all research shows that effective principals consider student success as the ultimate measure of effective leadership.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary

Principal leadership has been the guiding force of change in public education, meeting the challenges of the system and moving schools toward their established missions through the fostering of mutual cooperation, emotional support, and personal growth among the members of the organization (Seifert & Vornberg, 2002). The evolution of the principalship involved the establishment of leadership standards. In November of 1996, the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC), formed by the Chief Council of State School Officers (CCSSO), released the *ISLLC Standards for School Leaders* (CCSSO, 1996). The consortium’s purpose in linking educational leadership and productive schools was: (a) to reshape the concepts of school leadership and (b) to raise the level of expertise among school leaders (Shipman & Veir, 1999).

The ISLLC standards for school leaders offered a consistency in the expectations and qualities that defined proficiency in the field of educational leadership. This proficiency has become much more meaningful to school districts throughout the country since the enactment of No Child Left Behind. Adequate yearly progress (AYP) which occurs, or does not, in many schools, is a reflection on instruction. As school leaders are considered the instructional leaders in their schools, student achievement rates, defined by high-stakes testing, become a reflection on the leadership of the school.

Many studies have been conducted in attempts to link principal effectiveness and student achievement (Hallinger, Bickman, & Davis, 1996; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Owings, Kaplan, & Nunnery, 2005; Thompson & Legler, 2003), but have failed to show
statistically significant evidence that school leadership indeed impacts student achievement at the high school level. Studies of high performing schools, however, show that these schools tend to have principals that possess the characteristics of effective principals defined by leadership standards (Bell, 2001; Brock & Groth, 2003, McGee, 2004, Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003).

A study recently completed in the state of Virginia by Owings, Kaplan, and Nunnery (2005) obtained significant results linking principal quality to student achievement and concentrated on specific attributes of leadership by using a rubric based on the ISLLC Standards for evaluating principals’ practices. However, Owings et al. study did not show a statistical significance on the impact of quality principals on student achievement at the high school level in the state of Virginia. This researcher’s purpose for this study, therefore, was to determine to what extent principal competency, as determined by the ISLLC standards, predicts overall student achievement in Georgia high schools.

Because researchers’ findings have shown that other factors contribute to superintendents’ perceived competency of a principal or to student achievement, variables other than principal competency were included in the data analysis. These variables included the number of students in the schools who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (poverty level) and the principals’ years of experience in the schools. Therefore, this researcher also sought to determine to what extent the impact of principal competency on student achievement depends on the number of students who are on free and reduced-price lunches; and, based on this information, if principals with lower principal competency are placed in schools with lower socioeconomic levels. Finally, this
researcher sought to determine to what extent the impact of principal competency on student achievement depends on principal experience in the school.

Analysis of Research Findings

A simple and multiple linear regression were conducted involving these four variables with student test scores being the constant, or, dependent variable. Findings from the simple linear regression showed that a significant relationship exists between student test scores and principal competency as well as the number of students in a school who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (poverty level). The Chi-square test of independence also showed that a significant relationship exists between principal competency and high poverty schools, meaning that students who rated lower on principal competency were also in the schools with the lowest student achievement. A principal’s years of experience in a school was not a significant factor.

Following the simple linear regression, a multiple linear regression was conducted. The multiple linear regression showed a significant relationship between student test scores and the poverty level of the school, but not between student test scores and principal competency. A significance between student achievement and the principals’ years of experience in a school was still nonexistent.

An analysis was run on the quantitative data, and short-answer questions on the Survey of Principal Competencies were analyzed. The researcher’s findings indicated that most superintendent respondents in this study (92%) reported that they feel leadership standards are important in addressing the qualities necessary for effective leadership. Ninety-two percent of the respondents reported that the principal had effectively
addressed student learning at his or her school regardless of the item ratings or the overall principal competency score on the *Survey of Principal Competencies*.

Interviews were then conducted by the researcher to get an expressive depiction of how superintendents perceive effective principals. The end result of this data collection process was the identification of four themes central to the competency level of a principal and to student achievement in the school. These four facets are: 1. Interpersonal and Communication Skills, 2. Culture Building (Shared Values), 3. High Expectations for Students, and 4. High Quality Faculty and Staff.

**Discussion of Research Findings**

*Student Achievement and Principal Competency*

Principal competency was shown to be a significant predictor of student achievement using Language Arts and Mathematics score averages on the GHSGT from the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005 as the dependent variable and principal competency ratings on the *Survey of Principal Competencies* as one of three independent variables. These were grouped into quartiles according to the distribution of the data. Competency scores of the principals in the highest student achievement quartile had competency scores that ranged in the upper two quartiles (Q3 and Q4). However, when other factors were taken into consideration such as the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and the principals’ years of experience in a school, principal competency was not a significant predictor of student achievement.

Qualitative data derived from superintendent interviews revealed that superintendents’ perspectives of principal competency involved more than student achievement data, although that is extremely important. Principal competency has much
to do with interpersonal and communication skills in dealing with faculties, parents, and the school community.

Several explanations may account for the results in this study involving principal competency and student achievement. The ISLLC standards serve as a foundation for effective school leadership, and an effective school leader’s mission is a focus on teaching and learning and a commitment to a culture of high standards and expectations for all (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). However, principal competency is a multi-dimensional phenomenon.

Other research that offers explanations for the results in this study is that completed by Owings et al. (2005) on principal quality and student achievement in Virginia. Owings et al. investigated this concept at three academic levels: elementary, middle school, and high school. A significant relationship was found at the elementary (grades three and five), but there was no significant relationship found at the middle or high school levels. This, according to Owings et al. may be due, in part, to the size of schools. Where elementary schools tend to be smaller and have fewer faculty members than middle or high schools, impact of effective instructional elementary leadership may be stronger (Owings et al.). In other words, principals may have less instructional impact on a large faculty where classroom visits may be less frequent (Owings et al.).

Another explanation for the insignificant relationship at the high school level may be drawn from Papa et al.’s (2002) study of the attributes and career paths of principals. Papa et al.’s findings indicated that principal mobility rates in New York were high, but that more elementary principals tended to remain in the same school rather than did those in middle or high schools (Papa et al.).
The instructional impact principals have on their schools means working with the school community to establish a common mission and instructional vision and creating a collaborative school culture which facilitates continuous school improvement (Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Owings, 2005). In addition to this, the principal’s role involves selecting and retaining quality teachers and improving, or even removing, low performing teachers (Owings et al.). In successful human resource planning, Lunenburg and Ornstein (2000) considered such elements as identifying staffing needs, forecasting available personnel, and determining what personnel additions and/or replacements are necessary to maintain a staff which can fulfill the mission and vision of the school. Sustaining a community of workers whose aim is to fulfill the school’s mission and vision requires that the leader, as manager, understand and respond to the needs their employees bring to work (Bolman & Deal, 1991). All of these responsibilities contribute to instructional quality which, according to Owings et al., is integral in raising or maintaining student achievement (Owings et al.).

Timperley (2005) suggested that instructional leadership cannot be accomplished alone or without the necessary expertise in improving the capacity of individuals within the school community to promote the context of school improvement. Effective leadership is, essentially, achieving results through others (Hallinger and Heck, 1996) and “abandoning oneself to the strengths of others” (DePree, 1989, p. xvi). Great leaders, Collins (2001) stated, attribute the success of the organization to factors other than themselves and take responsibility when failure occurs. Therefore, it may be easy to place the “blame” for failure on the school leader who is the ultimate authority of the school when, in reality, many factors functioning together make a successful school.
Raw scores may give misconceptions about the successfulness of a school leader. A principal who is perceived as competent according to leadership standards, may, indeed, be competent, and student test scores may reflect this; but whether or not a principal is perceived as competent because of test scores, or the test scores are what they are because of this competency is unclear until other factors are considered. The multiple regression helped the researcher answer this important question about principal competency.

How standards figure into this phenomenon is an enigma except that it is shown in the qualitative data that superintendents believe leadership standards to address the qualities necessary for effective leadership. The data analysis also showed that the principals who rated highest on the *Survey of Principal Competencies*, based on the ISLLC standards, also served schools who rated the highest in student achievement. Clearly, there is a link between principal competency and student achievement. Furthermore, Owings et al. (2005) offers the possible explanation of newer principals scoring higher on the ISLLC standards survey because newer principals may be more familiar with the standards having more recently come through accredited programs. Nevertheless, the researcher’s findings indicate that principal competency does not predict student achievement in Georgia High Schools when other factors enter into the circumstances of the school leaders.

*Student Achievement and School Poverty*

The second of the three independent variables was the number of students in a school who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (poverty level). It was shown to be a significant predictor of student achievement in both the simple linear regression and the
multiple linear regression using Language Arts and Mathematics score averages on the GHSGT from the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005 as the dependent variable and the percentage of students in a school who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (poverty level) as the independent variable. This suggests that the socioeconomic status of the school had a significant correlation to student achievement in that the higher the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in a school, the lower the student achievement scores. Increased student achievement was found in schools with lower numbers of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

In order to determine if the impact of principal competency on student achievement was dependent on the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, the chi-square test of independence was performed. A significant difference was found. The competency scores of principals in schools where the number of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch is high, student achievement is more likely to be negatively impacted. In other words, the researcher’s results indicated that principal competency, according to the superintendents’ ratings, depends on school poverty.

Follow-up interviews with superintendents revealed that principals in impoverished schools must have the same expectations for the students as principals in schools that do not have high numbers of students on free or reduced-price lunch. Although all superintendents agreed that leading an impoverished school requires that the principal understand how to deal with parents and students of poverty, student learning expectations should not be different.

These findings concur with Owings, Kaplan, and Nunnery’s study (2005) on quality principals and student achievement whose findings stated that, after controlling
for percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and school-level achievement, schools with principals who rated the lowest on quality tended to work in schools with higher numbers of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch and that were the lowest achieving. Owings et al. had several possible explanations for this including the possibility that these principals are placed in high poverty schools because they are less capable or that other factors influence the principal quality. Furthermore, teacher turnover is high in high-poverty schools because the challenges make these schools less attractive (Owings et al.). Like Bell (2001), Owings et al. suggested that the lack of parent involvement, and, more especially, the lack of dynamic parent involvement may mean that a less dynamic principal is placed in these schools.

It is not clear from the data analysis whether less capable principals are placed in high poverty schools, whether they are perceived as being less capable, or if other factors contribute to principal competency. For example, typically, schools that have high numbers of students who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch have lower achieving students (Bell, 2001). However, it is not just one intervention or one component of these interventions that makes a difference in high poverty schools (McGee, 2004). Many things working together such as a caring staff, parental involvement, a strong curriculum implementation, professional development that coincides with the school improvement plan, and strong leadership makes a difference in high poverty schools (McGee). Therefore, it stands to reason that, when taking into consideration all of these factors, diagnosing the problem of low achievement in high poverty schools becomes complex.
Student Achievement and Principals Experience in a School

A simple and multiple linear regression was calculated using Language Arts and Mathematics score averages on the GHSGT from the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005 as the dependent variable and the principals’ number of years experience in a school as the third independent variable. A significant relationship was not found in the simple calculation or when taken together with principal competency or poverty.

In addition to the quantitative results, interviews conducted by the researcher revealed that superintendents consider years of experience in a school insignificant, as well. Student achievement and school culture are the indicators of principal effectiveness. The number of years the principal has been at the school did not matter.

These findings are similar to those in the Owings et al. (2005) study on principal quality and student achievement. A portion of the Owings’ et al. study sought to determine if years of experience in the same school had an effect on student achievement. Results showed that principals in Virginia who had the longest tenure in a school also had the lowest quality ranking, the highest poverty, and the lowest achieving students. In fact, principals who ranked the lowest on principal quality had significantly more years of experience in the schools than did any of the higher quality ranking principals.

Contrary to the results of the Owings et al. (2005) study, Papa, Lankford, and Wyckoff (2002) suggested from their study examining attributes of principals in the state of New York, that principals were entering the profession with little experience. This lack of experience, according to Papa et al., is inadequate. Afolabi, Nweke, and Stephens (2003) also indicated in their study of principals in the state of Georgia that the attrition rate of principals is high and that principals are leaving the profession to principals with
less experience and quality. Nevertheless, the researcher’s findings from this study clearly show that principal experience in a school is not a significant factor in the level of student achievement, but, in fact, it was the principals with an average of 5.23 years who actually had the highest achieving students. Owings’ et al. (2006) explanation of this, again, may be due to the fact that newer principals may have more recently come through a program from an accredited institution where leadership standards were an integral part of the curriculum.

Importance of Leadership Standards

   Most superintendent respondents in this study (93%) reported that they feel leadership standards are important in addressing the qualities necessary for effective leadership. The researcher’s findings indicated that the principals who rated highest on the Survey of Principal Competencies, based on the ISLLC standards, also served schools who rated the highest in student achievement.

   Interviews with superintendents revealed that, although leadership standards address the qualities that principals need in order to be effective, they are only a guide to what makes a principal effective. The principal must perform the practices outlined in the standards in order to be effective.

   Research has shown that effective principal leadership positively affects student success (Hessel & Holloway, 2003; Owings et al., 2005; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2003; Waters, Marzano, & McNulty, 2005). Successful schools are characterized by purpose-filled, purpose-driven instructional principal leadership, and the ISLLC standards provide a clearly focused, integrated view of the school leader’s mission to promote the success of all students (Hessel & Holloway).
Standards are considered by many educators and community leaders to be the vessel for the survival of the public schools, and the ISLLC standards’ intent, upon their construction, was to serve as a foundation for effective school leadership and to provide a common language for defining, or redefining, the role of the school leader (Hessel & Holloway, 2003). It is an obligation and function of school leaders to be able to recognize and absorb the responsibilities required of educational leaders that promote student success (Hessel & Holloway).

Principal Effectiveness in Addressing Student Learning

Superintendent respondents were asked if the principal they were evaluating for this study addressed student learning. Interestingly, no matter what the ratings on the Survey of Principal Competencies, 93% of the respondents reported that the principal had effectively addressed student learning at his or her school. Furthermore, all superintendents who were interviewed stated that the principal they surveyed was effective in addressing student learning.

Educational leadership encompasses a wide range of responsibilities that are placed on the principal leader. These responsibilities cannot be accomplished alone (Temperley, 2005), and, perhaps, superintendents realize this as they look at an overall picture of principals as they evaluate them. Superintendents who were interviewed placed equal amounts of weight on all aspects of the principalship as they evaluated their principals rather than basing their evaluations solely on student achievement in the schools.

However, the superintendents’ responses on the survey question coincide with Reeves’ (2004) research on principal evaluations where results in his study showed that
82% of the principals interviewed in his study of the evaluation of principals found leadership evaluations to be ambiguous, inconsistent, and counterproductive. Fewer than half of the principals interviewed felt their evaluations had anything to do with student achievement, only 54% found their evaluations to be based on clear standards, and only 47% felt that their evaluations were sufficiently specific to help them improve their performance (Reeves). Consistent with Reeves’ (2004) findings, the results in Davis and Hensley’s (1999) study showed that thirteen of the 14 principals interviewed viewed their formal evaluation process as perfunctory, shallow, inconsistent, and a waste of time.

Conclusions

Student Achievement and Principal Competency

Broad conceptualizations that drive this study are that principal leadership affects the achievement of high school students and that, to equitably measure this, many factors must be considered. The researcher’s findings indicated that a significant relationship between student achievement (student test scores) and the poverty level of the school exists when taken together with perceived principal competency, the poverty level of the school, and principals’ years of experience in the school. The multiple regression results did not indicate a significant relationship between student achievement and principal competency or between student achievement and principals’ years of experience in a school even though a significant relationship was determined to exist between student achievement and principal competency in the simple regression results. Therefore, this researcher is compelled to point out that principal competency, when taken together with the poverty level of the school and principals’ years of experience in a school, does not predict student achievement, nor does principal experience in a school.
The researcher presented areas of principal competency as they are defined by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium standards. These areas included: 1. Vision of Learning; 2. Student Learning and Staff Professional Growth; 3. Organizational Management and Operations: Safe, Effective, and Efficient Learning Environment; 4. Collaboration: Families and Communities; 5. Integrity, Fairness, and Ethics in Learning; and 6. Politics, Socialization, Economics, Legalities, and Cultures. These areas of educational leadership each have knowledge, disposition, and performance indicators that constituted “principal competency.” Although these indicators constitute qualities necessary for effective leadership and competent principals, principal competency is dependent on and affected by much more than these indicators alone.

Student Achievement and School Poverty

Just as Engler (2004) suggested that “no ISLLC standard is an island unto itself” (p. 133), all the ISLLC standards work together to ensure effective leadership that promotes success for all students. Success for all students means that students should not be excluded from a quality education according to gender, age, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. This researcher, therefore, included students of all socioeconomic levels to determine if the poverty level of a school predicts student achievement. According to the researcher’s findings, the number of students in a school who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (poverty level) is a predictor of student achievement.

Principal Competency and High Poverty Schools

Where schools that have high achieving students may also have highly competent principals, low achieving schools may not. This may mean that students achieve because
of their principal leadership competency, or it may just be that principals are considered competent or incompetent according to student output in their schools. This researcher believes that it is through attempting to successfully educate high poverty students that effective principal leadership may be challenged. Effective principals must be knowledgeable of strategies and initiatives that are proven successful with high poverty students.

*Student Achievement and Principal Experience in a School*

Principal experience in a school was proven not to have a significant impact on student achievement, and, in fact, had an inverse relationship. These results may have several explanations. First, results from a study conducted by Papa, Lankford, and Wyckoff (2002) of New York state principals show that high school principals tended to move to another school within the first six years of their principalship and this move was to schools similar to the ones they left. If this is the case in Georgia, these newer principals may have more recently come through an educational leadership program through an accredited institution which used leadership standards as a framework for its curriculum, thereby making these principals more aware of effective leadership indicators.

Secondly, the lack of significance between principal experience in a school and student achievement may be due to the fact that principals who are “new” to a school purposely and strongly encourage initiatives that have been proven effective in raising student achievement in order to raise or maintain the student achievement scores that existed upon their arrival. It is in a principal’s best interest to keep a school at Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status or move a school to the point of meeting AYP. Otherwise,
after the allotted four years of being in Needs Improvement, the restructuring process must be implemented and the principal may be replaced.

Implications

The foundation of successful leadership is a set of leadership standards such as the standards created and established by the Council of Chief State School Officers. The ISLLC standards offer a common language that recognize the knowledge, dispositions, and performances school leaders need in order to be effective.

Several groups within and outside the state of Georgia may benefit from a research study of principal competency, the ISLLC standards, and student achievement in Georgia. These groups include superintendents throughout school systems in the state of Georgia as well as those in other states, current and aspiring principals, the Georgia Department of Education, and the Georgia Professional Standards Commission. The researcher’s findings may provide knowledge of principal competency and the importance of leadership standards to superintendents throughout the state of Georgia that would, in turn, substantiate a need for educational leaders in the state, as well as in other states, to challenge leadership preparation programs and principal evaluation programs.

Leadership preparation programs in institutions of higher education must address the most current issues in education in order to best prepare their candidates for effective school leadership. Specific information from this study which can be used by other researchers or by educational leaders includes information about successfully educating impoverished students. This area of educational leadership is a challenge for even the most competent of school leaders. Improving educational leadership practice so that
students of all socioeconomic levels involves educating leadership candidates on specific interventions and framework of programs and practices that alter school cultures. Therefore, the researcher’s findings from this study may benefit institutions of higher education as they create and revise programs for their leadership candidates.

The researcher’s findings from this study may also benefit current and aspiring principals as they form or execute their guiding principles in schools throughout Georgia and the nation. Benefits to the Georgia Department of Education and the Professional Standards Commission would include the data input and their results as each variable is examined for association with what is the ultimate objective of education – student learning. Data collected by the researcher may enable the researcher to assist educational leaders in the state in considering the effectiveness of existing evaluation practices of current educational leaders as well as the quality of their leadership. Finally, the identification of leadership competency that promotes student learning may well assist institutions of higher education in the training and induction of current and aspiring educational leaders.

It is the goal of this researcher to continue to engage in a leadership role in the education system of Georgia, but it is just as much an aspiration of this researcher to make an attempt at raising the level of consciousness of quality principalship in the state of Georgia. Through this study of principal competency, the ISLLC standards, and student achievement in Georgia high schools, this knowledge could be useful to educational researchers as they seek to find systems and approaches that improve student learning.
Recommendations

Principal competency is perceived by superintendents as an integral component of student achievement initiatives. Respondents indicated that leadership standards reflect the qualities necessary for effective school leadership. Respondents also indicated that high achieving schools had highly competent principals. The researcher’s findings from this study, however, indicated that principal competency, combined with the poverty level of the school and principal experience in the school, is not an indicator, nor a predictor, of student achievement. The researcher’s findings from this study, therefore, suggest the need for further research in several areas.

Students of educational leadership and school leaders themselves should be knowledgeable of leadership standards and specific indicators that address the areas of leadership that ensure the success of all students. This practice should reflect research-based strategies and principal competency indicators such as those found in the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards. Using strong leadership standards as the foundation of leadership practice is one means of ensuring effective school leadership. As superintendents and school district personnel hire school leaders who are “qualified”, this researcher recommends that they investigate these candidates for their knowledge of research-based leadership practices.

As revealed in educational research and in this researcher’s findings, high poverty affects student achievement. Therefore, a second recommendation is that school leaders be knowledgeable of specific leadership indicators and school-wide initiatives that specifically and effectively address the needs of high poverty students. Information should be given to the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) for their
consideration in addressing the need for highly competent principals in high poverty schools. Clearly, from the consistency of findings in this study and from the results of the Owings et al. study (2005), this issue needs further investigation if educators are to address the educational needs and success of all students.

Finally, a recommendation specific to this study, is that it be completed in another state. Since the study on Principal Quality, the ISLLC Standards, and Student Achievement by Owings, Kaplan, and Nunnery (2005) indicated no significant relationship between principal quality and student achievement at the high school level, as did this study when taken together with the poverty levels of the schools and principal experience in the schools, at least one more study should be conducted in the United States to determine the consistency of these results. The success of this, however, would depend on the group’s similarity to the group used in this Georgia study to develop the prediction equation originally (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

Dissemination

In hopes of pursuing a career in some capacity of educational leadership, this researcher plans to use the results of this study as she works with fellow educational leaders to further the knowledge principals have of leadership standards and principal competency. For further outreach, this researcher would also like to write at least one article that may be published for use in the professional publications of which the researcher has a membership. Three such organizations are the Pi Lambda Theta International Honor Society and Professional Organization in Education, the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the Association of Supervision and
Curriculum Development (ASCD). The researcher also aspires to present this study at the annual convention of the AERA, as well as the ASCD annual conference.

Interest from principals and superintendents was high when pursuing participation and data and many of these requested results of the study upon its completion. Therefore, the researcher will submit the results to those who requested it through a hard copy version sent through the United States Postal Service.

Concluding Thoughts

Principal leadership has experienced role changes and added expectations over the years. These changes, though, do not mean that student achievement has not always been a priority or that it is no longer a main concern in our schools. On the contrary, student achievement remains the priority in Georgia school districts, and school leaders must remember this as they practice effective leadership. Therefore, this researcher must reiterate certain points of this study and add some revelations this study has exposed.

Although this researcher’s actual findings in this study do not establish a significant relationship between principal competency and student achievement when taken with the poverty level of the school and the principals’ years of experience in a school, data does suggest that a significant relationship exists when principal competency is considered as a single independent variable. When the poverty level of the school and principals’ years of experience in a school was added into the analysis, it became evident that many factors may contribute to perceived principal competency and many factors may affect student achievement to a greater degree than principal competency alone. One of these factors is the number of students in a school who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.
With such strong significance exhibited between the poverty level of a school and its student achievement, and with the knowledge that principals with low competency ratings are also in schools with high poverty levels, the educational leaders in the state of Georgia need to seriously consider addressing this phenomenon.

Interestingly, though, was the low number of principal participants from high poverty schools in this study. Most respondents were not from Title I or assisted schools with only .04% of the respondents being from Title I or targeted assisted schools. The lack of response could speak volumes about the needs of principals and students in high poverty schools, and, from the researcher’s findings in this study that a significant relationship exists between principal competency, student achievement, and the poverty level of a school, this may be perhaps the most important data from this study that should be shared with the Georgia Department of Education (GADOE) for their consideration in addressing the need for highly competent principals in high poverty schools. Clearly, from the consistent results in this study and from the results of the Owings et al. study (2005), this issue needs further investigation if educators are to address the educational needs and success of all students.

Leadership standards such as the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and their indicators are research based and recognize the qualities of effective school leadership. It is this researcher’s admonition that, without this solid foundation (ISLLC standards), it is unlikely that improving leadership practice which addresses the most challenging learning situations will occur. Yet principal evaluations in Georgia have not been based on these standards.
Many principals throughout the country, as revealed in the review of related literature of this study, have not felt that principal evaluation has been effective in improving principal practice due to evaluation inconsistency. Interviews with superintendents shed light on the subject of principal evaluations, however. In speaking with superintendents about how they evaluate their principals, they discussed in-depth knowledge of their principals and their leadership. Then again, all superintendents interviewed were from relatively small school districts. The detailed descriptions of the principals’ leadership practice may be quite different in a large school district where the superintendent has little to no time to spend getting to know each principal specifically.

This is not discounting the superintendents’ responses in this study. It is only offering an explanation for the inconsistency, reiterating that principal evaluations can be inconsistent when evaluations are not based on evaluation instruments which may or may not be founded on effective leadership practice. Furthermore, and a consideration for superintendents throughout the country, is that annual evaluations of principals be specific to leadership standards with appropriate feedback to principals for its use and dissemination in their daily routines and practice.

Demographics of the principal participants revealed interesting data that this researcher felt should be considered as the results of this study are examined. The researcher’s findings concluded that there are many new principals in the state or that many principals are new to their high schools. These data are consistent with the researcher’s findings considering principal experience in the schools. Although an analysis was not attempted on the student achievement in these principals’ schools, data does coincide with the researcher’s findings that principal experience in the schools
averages in the lowest quartile. Principal mobility in the high school may be an issue of concern to the Georgia’s Department of Education and to district superintendents.

Further demographic data from the researcher’s findings that should be of interest to the GADOE and district educational leaders are the number of male Caucasian principals in Georgia high schools. Perhaps this information will lead to more purposeful placements of minority and female principals in Georgia high schools, considering the information superintendents gave in interviews concerning minority and female principals. They saw no difference in principal competency between minority and Caucasian principals, and they saw great competency in organizational skills among female administrators.

Data may be skewed due to the lack of positive principal respondents. Many principals did not want to be involved in the study. None of these principals gave reasons. This unwillingness to be involved may be due to the fact that their schools have low test scores or that they perceive they are not considered to be competent principals either by themselves or by their superintendents. Also, they may have misunderstood that their involvement in the study only meant they were going to be evaluated by their superintendent and did not include added work.

Nevertheless, this may be an indication that many principals in Georgia do not want to be involved with studies that could lead to furthering the educational success of all students. It is the duty, therefore, of superintendents and school district personnel throughout the state to consider hiring competent leadership candidates who aspire to use leadership practices that address the educational needs of our most prized commodity – our children.
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APPENDICES
APPENDIX A

LETTER REQUESTING PRINCIPAL PERMISSION (ELECTRONIC VERSION)
Appendix A: Letter Requesting Principal Permission (Electronic Version)

Dear Principal:

My name is Amy Teague Loskoski, and I am a doctoral student in Educational Administration at the dissertation phase at Georgia Southern University. I am conducting a study involving the public high schools in Georgia on principal competencies as defined by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards and to determine if these competencies predict student achievement.

This letter is to request your assistance in gathering data for my study. Your school was identified through a random search which I conducted involving public high schools throughout the state of Georgia. My objective is to predict student achievement based on principal competency by having the principal’s superintendent rate principals according to the ISLLC standards. After receiving the completed surveys, I will perform an analysis using logistical regression on the principal score to the average passing student test scores on the Georgia High School Graduation Test in your school for the years 2002-2003, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005 to determine if principal competency is a predictor of student achievement. Although your involvement in this study is voluntary and there is no penalty for choosing not to participate, participation does yield a more reliable result and is more representative of the population. Please be assured that all responses and evaluations will remain anonymous. Only I will have access to any responses and surveys completed by superintendents. The study will be most useful to you should you request a copy of the study’s results. If so, you may indicate your interest by contacting me at (912) 898-1638 or emailing me at atlos59@hotmail.com.

If you consent to participate in this research study and to the terms above, please respond to this email stating, “Yes, I wish to participate in this research study.” You will be sent an electronic response confirming your consent. If you have questions about this study, please contact me or my faculty advisor, James Burnham at (912) 681-5567. For questions concerning your rights as a research participant or the IRB approval process, contact Georgia Southern University Office of Research Services and Sponsored Programs at 912-681-0843.

Let me thank you in advance for your assistance in studying principal competency and student achievement. Your help and permission is most appreciated.

Respectfully,

Amy T. Loskoski
APPENDIX B

LETTER REQUESTING SUPERINTENDENT PARTICIPATION

(ELECTRONIC VERSION)
Appendix B: Letter Requesting Superintendent Participation (Electronic Version)

Dear Dr. (Superintendent’s Name):

My name is Amy Teague Loskoski, and I am a doctoral student in Educational Administration at Georgia Southern University. I am conducting a study throughout the public schools in the state of Georgia on the quality of principals as related to the ISLLC standards and the relationship that exists between principals and student achievement.

This letter is to request your assistance in gathering data on Principal, principal of (Name) High School in your district whom I have identified through a stratified random search. My objective is to analyze the quality of administrators in the state of Georgia as it relates to the ISLLC standards and through a Survey of Principal Competencies http://www.surveymonkey.com which is based on the ISLLC standards. After receiving the completed survey, I will compare the principal score to student test scores in that principal’s school to determine the relationship that exists between principal quality and student achievement. In respect for this principal and in keeping the integrity of the position of principal, I have asked and received permission from this principal for evaluative purposes in this study. Although the completion of this survey is voluntary, please understand that a large return rate on the survey gives a more reliable result and is more representative of the population. Be assured that your answers will remain anonymous. The study will be most useful to you should you request a copy of the study’s results. If so, you may indicate your interest by contacting me at (912) 898-1638 or through email: amy.loskoski@savannah.chatham.k12.ga.us .

Let me thank you in advance for your assistance in studying the relationship of principal competencies and student achievement. Your help is most appreciated. To complete the survey, click on the link http://www.surveymonkey.com . If you feel you do not have enough knowledge of this principal and would like to entrust this task to a colleague in an evaluative position who is more familiar with this principal’s performance, please feel free to do so.

Respectfully,

Amy T. Loskoski
APPENDIX C

SECOND LETTER OF REQUEST FOR SUPERINTENDENT PARTICIPATION

(HARD COPY VERSION)
Appendix C: Second Letter of Request for Superintendent Participation

(Hard Copy Version)

May 5, 2006

Amy T. Loskoski
223 Stonebridge Dr.
Savannah, GA 31410
912-898-1638

Dr. (Superintendent’s Name), Superintendent
(District) Schools
Street Address
City, GA ZIP Code

Dear Dr. (Superintendent’s Name):

My name is Amy Teague Loskoski, and I am a doctoral student in Educational Administration at Georgia Southern University. I am conducting a study throughout the public high schools in the state of Georgia on principal competencies as defined by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) standards to determine if these competencies predict student achievement.

This letter is to request your assistance in gathering data on Principal, principal of (Name) High School in your district whom I have identified through a random search. My objective is to analyze the quality of administrators in the state of Georgia as it relates to the ISLLC standards and through a Survey of Principal Competencies which is based on the ISLLC standards. After receiving the completed survey, I will compare the principal score to student test scores in that principal’s school to determine the relationship that exists between principal competency and student achievement. Out of respect for this principal and in keeping the integrity of the position of principal, I have asked and received permission from this principal for evaluative purposes in this study. Although the completion of this survey is voluntary, please understand that a large return rate on the survey gives a more reliable result and is more representative of the population. Be assured that your answers will remain anonymous. The study will be most useful to you should you request a copy of the study’s results. If so, you may indicate your interest by contacting me at (912) 898-1638 or through email: amy.loskoski@savannah.chatham.k12.ga.us. Also, my home address is 223 Stonebridge Dr., Savannah, GA 31410.

Let me thank you in advance for your assistance in studying the relationship of principal competencies and student achievement. Your help is most appreciated. After completing the survey, please return it to me in the addressed and stamped envelope. If you wish and are able, you may access the survey using the link http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=182411827537. If you feel you do not have enough knowledge of this principal and would like to entrust this task to a colleague in an
evaluative position who is more familiar with this principal’s performance, please feel free to do so.

Respectfully,

Amy T. Loskoski
APPENDIX D

SURVEY OF PRINCIPAL COMPETENCIES

(ATTACHMENT AND HARD COPY VERSION)
Appendix D: Survey of Principal Competencies (Attachment and Hard Copy Version)

Survey of Principal Competencies

This survey consists of items associated with the competencies of school leaders. Please take a few moments to respond based on your perceptions regarding (Principal’s Name), principal of (Name) High School. The anonymity of your answers is assured and will be used only in this study in aggregated form.

Answer items 1 – 7 in short answer or by indicating the appropriate choice.
Please rate items 8 – 25 according to the following scale:
1 = Very Ineffective    2 = Ineffective    3 = Fairly Effective    4 = Effective    5 = Very Effective

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Answer Options</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Name of your school district</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Number of years principal has been in current position</td>
<td>____________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Gender of principal</td>
<td>Male   Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Race of principal</td>
<td>Caucasian  African American  Hispanic  Native American  Asian  Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Is this school a Title I school?</td>
<td>Yes   No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Do you feel this principal has been effective in addressing student learning at his/her school?</td>
<td>Yes   No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Do you feel that leadership standards such as those produced by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) address the qualities necessary for effective leadership?</td>
<td>Yes   No</td>
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Standard 1: Vision of Learning

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<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Scale</th>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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</table>
9. All stakeholders are involved and contribute to the school/district’s vision during the decision-making process.

10. Curriculum and programs are shaped by the school/district’s vision statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 2: Student Learning and Staff Professional Growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11. Various supervisory and evaluation models are employed.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Standard 3: Organizational Management and Operations: Safe, Effective, and Efficient Learning Environment</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12. Policies, lesson plans, teacher evaluations, and other data are used to ensure technology supports student achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Policies and procedures are followed that support a culture of high expectations for students.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Standard 4: Collaboration: Families and Communities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14. Stakeholder input is gathered to ensure fiscal resources are managed responsibly, efficiently, and effectively.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Daily operations are designed and managed to ensure success for all students.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Standard 5: Integrity, Fairness, and Ethics in Learning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16. Budget is aligned to the goals in the Comprehensive Improvement Plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Communicates with all stakeholders (i.e. students, staff, parents, community members, etc.) frequently (multiple times each week).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Treatment of stakeholders is equitable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Community resources are effectively used for the benefit of the students.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Standard 6: Personal and Professional Growth</th>
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<tr>
<td>20. Rights and confidentiality of students, faculty, and staff are protected.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Criterion</th>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>2</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
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21. Values, beliefs, and attitudes are demonstrated that inspire others to higher levels of performance.
22. The school/district invites public input and involvement through the use of surveys, public forums, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard 6: Politics, Socialization, Economics, Legalities, and Cultures</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>23. Understands the impact of state and federal decisions on the local educational systems.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>24. Works with local agencies to supplement school/district initiatives.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Communicates with local, state, and federal leaders in an effort to impact decisions that will result in an increase in student achievement.</td>
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APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE
Appendix E: Interview Questionnaire

Interview Questionnaire

School District: ___________  Name of Principal: _________________

Years in the School: ___________  Gender: _____  Race: ___________

Poverty Level: _______________  NI Status: _______________________

1. Do you feel this principal has been effective in addressing student learning at his/her school?

2. What initiatives has he implemented that have been successful?

3. What is the most important characteristic of effective principals?
Briefly explain the ISLLC standards (handouts)
4. Do you feel that leadership standards such as those produced by the Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) address the qualities necessary for effective leadership?

5. How do you evaluate your principals?

6. What factors do you feel contribute to the success level of a principal?
7. Do you think the student achievement (test scores/AYP) in the school and the poverty level of the school should be considered when evaluating principals?

8. How do you feel the socioeconomic status of a school affects student achievement scores?
9. How does the principal leadership in an impoverished school differ from that in a school that has a low poverty rate?

10. Do you feel longevity at a school makes for better student achievement?

11. How does principal experience affect student achievement?
12. How important is the race of the principal in addressing the school culture?

13. How do women and men differ in their approaches to principal leadership?
APPENDIX F

INTERSTATE SCHOOL LEADERS LICENSURE CONSORTIUM STANDARDS

FOR SCHOOL LEADERS
Appendix F: Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium Standards

Interstate School Leaders Licensure Consortium (ISLLC) Standards for School Leaders

Standard 1

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.

Knowledge
The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- learning goals in a pluralistic society
- the principles of developing and implementing strategic plans
- systems theory
- information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies
- effective communication
- effective consensus-building and negotiation skills

Dispositions
The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- the educability of all
- a school vision of high standards of learning
- continuous school improvement
- the inclusion of all members of the school community
- ensuring that students have the knowledge, skills, and values needed to become successful adults
- a willingness to continuously examine one’s own assumptions, beliefs, and practices
- doing the work required for high levels of personal and organization performance

Performances
The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

- the vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members
- the vision and mission are communicated through the use of symbols, ceremonies, stories, and similar activities
- the core beliefs of the school vision are modeled for all stakeholders
- the vision is developed with and among stakeholders
- the contributions of school community members to the realization of the vision are recognized and celebrated
- progress toward the vision and mission is communicated to all stakeholders
- the school community is involved in school improvement efforts
- the vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions
an implementation plan is developed in which objectives and strategies to achieve the vision and goals are clearly articulated

assessment data related to student learning are used to develop the school vision and goals

relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals

barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed

needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals

existing resources are used in support of the school vision and goals

the vision, mission, and implementation plans are regularly monitored, evaluated, and revised.
Standard 2

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by advocating, nurturing, and sustaining a school culture and instructional program conducive to student learning and staff professional growth.

Knowledge
The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:
- student growth and development
- applied learning theories
- applied motivational theories
- curriculum design, implementation, evaluation, and refinement
- principles of effective instructions
- measurements, evaluation, and assessment strategies
- diversity and its meaning for educational programs
- adult learning and professional development models
- the change process for systems, organizations, and individuals
- the role of technology in promoting student learning and professional growth
- school cultures

Dispositions
The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:
- student learning as the fundamental purpose of schooling
- the proposition that all students can learn
- the variety of ways in which students can learn
- life long learning for self and others
- professional development as an integral part of school improvement
- the benefits that diversity brings to the school community
- a safe and supportive learning environment
- preparing students to be contributing members of society

Performances
The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:
- all individuals are treated with fairness, dignity, and respect
- professional development promotes a focus on student learning consistent with the school vision and goals
- students and staff feel valued and important
- the responsibilities and contributions of each individual are acknowledged
- barriers to student learning are identified, clarified, and addressed
- diversity is considered in developing learning experiences
- life long learning is encouraged and modeled
- there is a culture of high expectations for self, student, and staff performance
- technologies are used in teaching and learning
- student and staff accomplishments are recognized and celebrated
- multiple opportunities to learn are available to all students
- the school is organized and aligned for success
• curricular, co-curricular and, extra-curricular programs are designed, implemented, evaluated, and refined
• curriculum decisions are based on research, expertise of teachers, and the recommendations of learned societies
• the school culture and climate are assessed on a regular basis
• a variety of sources of information is used to make decisions
• student learning is assessed using a variety of techniques
• multiple sources of information regarding performance are used by staff and students
• a variety of supervisory and evaluation models is employed
• pupil personnel programs are developed to meet the needs of students and their families
Standard 3

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by ensuring management of the organization, operations, and resources for a safe, efficient, and effective learning environment.

Knowledge
The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:
- theories and models of organizations and the principles of organizational development
- operational procedures at the school and district level principles and issues relating to school safety and security
- human resources management and development
- principles and issues relating to fiscal operations of school management
- principles and issues relating to school facilities and use of space
- legal issues impacting school operations
- current technologies that support management functions

Dispositions
The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:
- making management decisions to enhance learning and teaching
- taking risks to improve schools
- trusting people and their judgments
- accepting responsibilities
- high-quality standards, expectations, and performances
- involving stakeholders in management processes
- a safe environment

Performances
The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:
- knowledge of learning, teaching and student development is used to inform management decisions
- operational procedures are designed and managed to maximize opportunities for successful learning
- emerging trends are recognized, studied and applied as appropriate
- operational plans and procedures to achieve the vision and goals of the school are in place
- collective bargaining and other contractual agreements related to the school are effectively managed
- the school plan, equipment, and support systems operate safely, efficiently, and effectively
- time is managed to maximize attainment of organizational goals
- potential problems and opportunities are identified
- problems are confronted and resolved in a timely manner
- financial, human, and material resources are aligned to the goals of the school
- the school acts entrepreneurially to support continuous improvement
- organizational systems are regularly monitored and modified as needed
• stakeholders are involved in decisions affecting schools
• responsibility is shared to maximize ownership and accountability
• effective problem-framing and problem-solving skills are used
• effective conflict resolution skills are used
• effective group-process and consensus-building skills are used
• effective communication skills are used
• there is effective use of technology to manage school operations
• fiscal resources of the school are managed responsibly, efficiently and effectively
• a safe, clean, and aesthetically pleasing school environment is created and maintained
• human resource functions support the attainment of school goals
• confidentiality and privacy of school records are maintained
Standard 4

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by collaborating with families and community members, responding to diverse community interests and needs, and mobilizing community resources.

Knowledge
The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:
- emerging issues and trends that potentially impact the school community
- the conditions and dynamics of the diverse school community
- community resources
- community relations and marketing strategies and processes
- successful models of school, family, business, community, government and higher education partnerships

Dispositions
The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:
- schools operating as an integral part of the larger community
- collaboration and communication with families
- involvement of families and other stakeholders in school decision-making processes
- the proposition that diversity enriches the school
- families as partners in the education of their children
- the proposition that families have the best interests of their children in mind
- resources of the family and community needing to be brought to bear on the education of students
- an informed public

Performances
The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:
- high visibility, active involvement, and communication with the larger community is a priority
- relationships with community leaders are identified and nurtured
- information about family and community concerns, expectations, and needs is used regularly
- there is outreach to different business, religious, political, and service agencies and organizations
- credence is given to individuals and groups whose values and opinions may conflict
- the school and community serve one another as resources
- available community resources are secured to help the school solve problems and achieve goals
- partnerships are established with area businesses, institutions of higher education, and community groups to strengthen programs and support school goals
- community youth family services are integrated with school programs
- community stakeholders are treated equitably
- diversity is recognized and valued
• effective media relations are developed and maintained
• a comprehensive program of community relations is established
• public resources and funds are used appropriately and wisely
• community collaboration is modeled for staff
• opportunities for staff to develop collaborative skills are provided
Standard 5

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by acting with integrity, fairness, and in an ethical manner.

Knowledge
The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

- the purpose of education and the role of leadership in modern society
- various ethical frameworks and perspectives on ethics
- the values of the diverse school community
- professional codes of ethics
- philosophy and history of education

Dispositions
The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

- the ideal of the common good
- the principles of the Bill of Rights
- the right of every student to a free, quality education
- bringing ethical principles to the decision-making process
- subordinating one’s own interest to the good of the school community
- accepting the consequences of upholding one’s principles and actions
- using the influence of one’s office counteractively and productively in the service of all students and their families
- development of a caring school community

Performances
The administrator:

- examines personal and professional values
- demonstrates a personal and professional code of ethics
- demonstrates values, beliefs, and attitudes that inspire others to higher levels of performance
- serves as a role model
- accepts responsibility for school operations
- considers the impact of one’s administrative practices on others
- uses influence of the office to enhance the educational program rather than for personal gain
- treats people fairly, equitably, and with dignity and respect
- protects the rights and confidentiality of students and staff
- demonstrates appreciation for and sensitivity to the diversity in the school community
- recognizes and respects the legitimate authority of others
- examines and considers the prevailing values of the diverse school community
- expects that others in the school community will demonstrate integrity and exercise ethical behavior
- opens the school to public scrutiny
- fulfills legal and contractual obligations
- applies laws and procedures fairly, wisely, and considerably
Standard 6

A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.

Knowledge
The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:

• principles of representative governance that undergird and system of American school
• the role of public education in developing and renewing a democratic society and an economically productive nation
• the law as related to education and schooling
• the political, social, cultural, and economic systems and processes that impact schools
• models and strategies of change and conflict resolution as applied to the larger political, social, cultural and economic contexts of schooling
• global issues and forces affecting teaching and learning
• the dynamics of policy development and advocacy under our democratic political system
• the importance of diversity and equity in a democratic society

Dispositions
The administrator believes in, values, and is committed to:

• education as a key to opportunity and social mobility
• recognizing a variety of ideas, values, and cultures
• importance of a continuing dialogue with other decision makers affecting education
• actively participating in the political and policy-making context in the service of education
• using legal systems to protect student rights and improve student opportunities

Performances
The administrator facilitates processes and engages in activities ensuring that:

• the environment in which schools operate is influenced on behalf of students and their families
• communication occurs among the school community concerning trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which schools operate
• there is ongoing dialogue with representatives of diverse community groups
• the school community works within the framework of policies, laws, and regulations enacted by local, state, and federal authorities
• public policy is shaped to provide quality education for students
• lines of communication are developed with decision makers outside the school community